VIDYAJYOTI

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Volume XLVIII

January to December 1984

Edited from
Institute of Religious Studies
VIDYAJYOTI—DELHI

Printed by
CATHOLIC PRESS—RANCHI
INDIA

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII **JANUARY 1984** **No. 1**

In This Issue

The main topic for discussion at the CBCI general meeting, scheduled to take place next month in Nagpur, is "The Responsibility of the Church in the Face of Today's Challenges and the Specific Role of the Laity in this Field". The position paper on this topic will be presented by Fr Alfred DE SOUZA, Director, Indian Social Institute, New Delhi. As leader in the present issue of VIDYAJYOTI we publish another paper by the same author, entitled "The Relevance of Christianity in India Today". It sets the stage for the discussion and will help our readers to ask themselves the same challenging questions as the bishops will be facing. Fr Alfred DE SOUZA advocates a shift in orientation from social welfare to a "political approach to work out solutions to the problems of poverty, inequality and social injustice". In particular, he points to the way opened by the recent redefinition of the Supreme Court of India for taking up the causes of the oppressed in public interest litigation. He goes on to show the implications of a political orientation of the Church's mission by way of organisational structures and participatory processes.

In a previous issue of VIDYAJYOTI Fr George LOBO commented on the New Marriage Law. In our series of articles on the New Code he now reviews the new law regulating the other sacraments. No spectacular changes have been introduced. The new law, as would be expected, codifies the various changes which have entered into the celebration of the sacraments in implementation of the Vatican II reform. Priests in the pastoral ministry will appreciate the easy access to the present law which the Code provides and the comments made by the author. Here and there in the course of his article Fr LOBO points to instances where the Code seems to fall short of official post-Conciliar doctrine and practice; he also notes where further openings would have been possible and welcome.

In our newly started Forum Section we publish a note by Fr D. CORTADELLAS on Ecumenism and Social Awareness. Are not the awakening of social awareness and social action the privileged field today for ecumenical activity and united Christian witness? The author answers in the affirmative, and goes on to point out that this primarily constitutes the practical ecumenism at the grass-roots which must accompany high level theological ecumenism. He further notes that in a situation of religious pluralism such as obtains in India, ecumenism needs to be understood in the broadest sense, resulting in concerted action by action groups on a non-denominational basis.

The Relevance of Christianity in India Today

Alfred DE SOUZA, S.J.*

IN the seminar organised last year by the Students' Council of the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth on "Human Liberation in the Indian Context", the focus was on a systematic analysis of society and on the three major responses— Gandhism, Marxism and Christianity to the Indian situation. The theme of the seminar this year, "The Relevance of Christianity in India Today", provides an excellent opportunity for an evaluation of the Christian response and to examine the ways in which it is relevant, significant and meaningful to contemporary society.[1] The first part of my paper will be concerned with the contextual aspects of the response of Christianity as it is expressed in its organisational forms in the Church. This section will briefly identify some of the major aspects of society as well as significant characteristics of the Church as they relate to the various activities undertaken by it to respond to the problems and challenges of society in the differing historical situations before and after independence. The second part of the paper will be concerned with ways in which Christianity or the Church could become more relevant and meaningful to contemporary society, that is, ways in which the Church could become more effective in the service of liberation, human rights and social justice.[2]

Historical Context

The Indian situation has two major characteristics which influence the social stratification of society and determine the relations between the different strata: pervasive inequality and its consequence which is poverty. Sociologists like Beteille (1971) have noted that inequality in India is qualitatively different from inequality in other societies

---

*Alfred DE SOUZA, S.J., is Director of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

1. The present paper was delivered as Keynote Address to the Seminar on The Relevance of Christianity in India Today organised by the Students' Council, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, July 7-9, 1983.

2. I would like to acknowledge the valuable comments and suggestions of my colleagues at the Indian Social Institute, especially Walter Fernandes and Jose Kananaikil. The responsibility, however, for the views expressed here is solely mine.

because it tends to be "cumulative" in the sense that groups that are underprivileged in one sphere of life tend to be underprivileged in all other spheres. Thus, for example, Scheduled Castes experience discrimination in the ritual sphere and simultaneously in health, education and employment (Kananaikil 1983; 1983a). The socialistic pattern of society, which is the objective of the planning exercise, has affirmed equality of opportunity and human dignity on paper but has been quite ineffective in translating these human rights and values into the reality of rural and urban society. Social, economic and political disparities dominate society and this is perhaps most clearly seen in the fact that the Five Year Plans have been quite ineffective in bringing about the kind of social and economic transformation necessary for the emergence of the socialistic pattern of society. According to the National Sample Survey data on household consumer expenditure, 32nd Round (July 1977 to June 1978), there were 304 million people below the poverty line or 43 per cent of the total population in 1978. The poverty line was defined as Rs 65 per capita per month in 1977-78 prices, corresponding to a minimum daily calorie requirement of 2400 per person in the rural areas and Rs 75, corresponding to the calorie requirement of 2100 in the urban areas. 253 million or 50 per cent of the rural population were unable to meet the minimum daily calorie requirement and for the urban areas it was 51 million or 39 per cent.

This magnitude of human destitution is surprising when one recalls that the average growth rate between 1951 and 1971 was 3.6 per cent and in some years even higher (Raj Krishna 1980; Sen 1982). The general tendency to interpret the poverty line in terms of income tends to overlook the shocking fact of the malnutrition and hunger of masses of the urban and rural poor. Sen (1982) has pointed out that large scale famines happened only in pre-independence days and that the moral and political consciousness of elites will not allow famines of the magnitude of the Bengal famine of 1943 to occur. On the other hand, the elites who control government policy have permitted endemic hunger and undernutrition of the masses of the people so that, as Sen (1982) puts it, "at least a third of the rural population has regularly — and quietly — gone to bed hungry and malnourished."

This endemic undernutrition of the rural and urban poor is reflected in the high infant mortality rate which is more than ten times that of the industrialised countries. In any single year 40 per cent of the deaths are of children below 5 years of age and the infant mortality rate continues to be at the high level of 127 per thousand live births, with a rural mortality rate of 121 and an urban mortality

rate of 81. In a study of four migrant bastis in Delhi (Singh and de Souza 1976), the infant mortality rate among Rajasthani construction labourers was 445, implying that these migrant women labourers could expect 50 per cent of their children to die before completing one year of age Thus the problem of inequality turns out to be a question of the right to life. Recently Gopalan (1982) noted that out of the 23 million children expected to be born in 1983, 3 million would die before they completed one year of age and another 1 million before completing 5 years of age. Of the remaining 19 million children 9 million would suffer from severe malnutrition which would affect their physical vitality and mental growth and another 7 million would suffer from milder forms of malnutrition so that they would enter adulthood physically and mentally handicapped. Only 3 million children would be able to meet their nutrition requirements and grow into physically healthy and mentally alert adults.

The image of poverty appears to be primarily rural, yet this would be misleading because there is massive poverty in the cities and between 25-30 per cent of the population of the major cities of India comprise the urban poor who live mostly in slums and squatter settlements. In Bombay for example, 3 7 million or 40 per cent of the population lives in slums or squatter settlements with about 200,000 people residing on the pavements Though unemployment rates among the urban poor are extremely low, wage incomes tend to be below the minimum wage rates and self-employment provides only subsistence living. In Calcutta 45 per cent of the population in the mid-70s had incomes of less than Rs 200 In Delhi a household survey by the Town and Country Planning Organisation (1971) reported that 70 per cent of the households in the squatter settlements had monthly incomes of less than Rs 250 A study of a slum in Madras in 1975 reported that 80 per cent of the population was below the poverty line (Singh and de Souza 1980).

Inequality is pervasive in our society and is reflected in land-ownership, occupational structure, health care, political participation and education. In education, for example, the primary school is primarily a rural phenomenon while the college expresses the social demand of the urban elites In 1970-71, 24 per cent of the total educational expenditure was for 411 lakh of primary school students and the same amount was allocated for 24 lakh students in colleges and other institutions of specialised education. Thus a disproportionate amount is spent on little more than 20 per cent of the population in the urban areas and, more strikingly on less than one per cent of all those enrolled in the education system (Karlekar 1983: 209).

In spite of democratic forms of government and the electoral process, the poor are by and large excluded from participation in the more important institutions of decision-making at the local, regional and national levels. Though one often hears predictions that the poor will rise up and revolt, the poor continue to be powerless and voiceless and the electoral system has merely turned them into vote banks for the benefit of the rural and urban elites who continue to use the poor to promote their own interests. The situation of the urban poor is a typical instance of the exclusion of the poor from the benefits of planning, housing and the satisfaction of their basic needs. The ideology of urban planning supports the interests of the middle and upper classes and discriminates against the urban poor and even when pro-poor housing and social welfare policies are adopted the allocation of resources is determined by access to power, and almost invariably areas where the poor reside lack basic services and amenities. Slums proliferate because of political patronage and even at the level of stark urban poverty mobilisation of votes takes place in exchange for the provision of facilities, resources and financial benefits. The urban poor continue to be powerless because they are fragmented by caste, ethnicity and region and are unable to mobilise themselves to demand their rights and social justice (de Souza 1983: 152).

In the rural areas the situation of the rural poor and agricultural labourers has deteriorated rather than improved after over 30 years of planned economic development. According to the 32nd Round of the National Sample Survey, Scheduled Castes comprise 52 per cent of agricultural labourers in contrast to 25 per cent of the total work force. Notwithstanding land reform and the distribution of surplus land, 55 per cent of the Scheduled Castes own no land and the average size of those who own land is 0.88 acre; 67 per cent of the Scheduled Castes who own land have less than 1 acre, 47 per cent owning land less than 0.5 acre Thus, in India, where more than half of all the land is owned by the top 10 per cent of landowners, the majority of small farmers have less than 1 acre. As the ILO (1979: 1) in a recent study pointed out, unequal distribution of productive assets, particularly land, is the major factor in the perpetuation of poverty and "the answer as to why poverty has increased has more to do with the structure of the economy than its rate of growth."

Christian Response

Historically what has been the response of Christianity to the changing social reality of India? I will be concerned here with the Roman Catholic Church, as the organised form of Christianity, without necessarily excluding the other Christian denominations and also

recognising that the Church is characterised by great social and cultural diversity corresponding to its geographical dispersal, though certain uniformities occur because of its organisational structure. Briefly, influenced by its perception of the social reality, the Church went through a transition from a "mission age" in the 19th century to an increasingly "institution building" or consolidation phase in the 20th century. The "mission age" coincided with colonialism and the primary focus was on evangelisation interpreted as conversion.[3] Though at this time there was a network of institutions for education, health and social welfare services, they were perceived to have an instrumental function in supporting the primary orientation to evangelisation.

The end of the 19th century and beginning of the 20th century marked the phase of institutionalisation, particularly in education, health and charitable activities. In education Catholic schools appear to have performed two different and opposed functions As Fernandes (1980: 29) points out, "Church involvement in education had both its liberative and collaborative aspects; namely the possibility of liberation accorded to Christians of low-caste origin and to women; and the strengthening of the forces of exploitation." In performing this dual function in colonial India the Church was not much different from the university in colonial Africa. As Mazrui (1975: 192) points out:

> African Universities were capable of being at once mechanisms for political liberation and agencies of cultural dependency University graduates in Africa, precisely because they were the most deeply Westernised Africans, were the most culturally dependent. .. The same educational institutions which have produced nationalists eager to end colonial rule and to establish African self-government have also perpetuated cultural colonialism

Educational institutions set up by the Church reproduced the forms of stratification that conformed to colonial perceptions of Indian society. Thus the purpose of education was to prepare Indians from the upper castes to participate in colonial society and the management of the social, economic and cultural processes supportive of the political rulers. As a result of this kind of education there was a cleavage between British administrators and educated Indians as well as between "the Indian common man and the educated Indians, almost always belonging to the moneyed class, removed from their own society and reproduced on a European model. This reproduction involved a change in language, a change-over to the coloniser's culture and disparagement of the local one, in order to legitimise colonial occupation

3. In this section I have made extensive use of a carefully documented monograph on the Indian Catholic Community (Fernandes 1980).

in the name of its 'civilising mission'" (Fernandes: 26). Thus, Church-related educational institutions in the colonial period promoted values and attitudes that did not recognise the hierarchical norms of the caste society and at the same time promoted the creation of a new social stratification based on education and the occupational structure. The social welfare approach of the Church was the outcome of a theology of mission centred on conversion to the Church and it expressed concretely a pastoral concern for the suffering, misery and exploitation of the poor. Referring to a similar missionary experience in Africa, Nyerere (1981: 221) rightly stated that "it is absurd to criticise the early missionaries for these attitudes, or the actions which sprung from them; they were coming with love and in a spirit of service to their God, but we are all creatures of our time and place."

The Church's role in the field of health was well recognised but again, as in education, the forms of institutionalised health care, particularly hospitals, were determined by colonial norms which by-passed the majority of the people who were in need of health care. The Report of the National Advisory Council (1977: 41) suggests structural reasons why Church sponsored health institutions laboured under severe limitations. It states that in the field of health,

> the work of the Church should take up a different structure. The present form of medical attention emphasises curative as against preventive care, which includes environmental health and the remedying of nutritional deficiencies. It emphasises allopathy with its excessive reliance on drugs and foreign medicines as against homeopathy and unani with their cheaper local remedies. Finally it involves hospitalisation and costly buildings with its expensive equipment and upkeep.

The institutional expansion particularly in education and health after independence has been altogether remarkable and this is perhaps related to the perception of the Church as a minority group. Fernandes (1980: 11-12) points out that, "in the last three decades, university colleges have grown from 30 to over 125 and their student body by over 1000%. High schools have increased by more than 100% and their student body by nearly 300%. Primary schools have gone up to 15% and their student body by 25%. Similarly, hospitals have increased by about 900% from 53 to over 500, dispensaries by 400% from about 153 to about 750 . . . ."

Another important aspect of the orientation of the Church during the colonial period and even after independence has been the tendency of Christians as a minority community to enter into "alliances" with those in power. On the one hand, the Church perceives herself as politically neutral and ideologically committed to the overall goals of the Gospel whereas in reality the network of Christian institutions in

education, health and social welfare have been integrated into the overall social, economic and political framework supportive of the existing system — colonial rule or liberal democracy. The National Advisory Council (1977: 25) notes that there has been general recognition "on the part of Catholics and non-Catholics that the Church has served the needs of the people by bringing relief to them in various ways through her welfare services. . . ." Yet

> that the Church is not viewed as a champion for justice for the poor and oppressed, emerges repeatedly . In preserving the status quo of her institutions and even veering to court the rich in society she has alienated herself from the masses and is therefore not sufficiently alive to the vast dimensions of social problems like rural development (agrarian reforms), caste discrimination, unemployment, to mention only a few of the problems that are rocking the nation

There are two other aspects that profoundly influence both the orientation and action of the Church in society The hierarchical organisation of the Church tends to ignore the contribution of the people, devalue their participation in decision-making and put excessive emphasis on the vision and enlightened concern of a relatively small group of Church leaders and decision-makers. As the National Advisory Council (1977: 29) notes, "one of the obstacles to the emergence of lay leadership is the tendency of clergy and religious to assume control of activities leaving little margin to the laymen."

The other aspect which has been treated extensively by a number of scholars (Forrester 1980. Caplan 1980; Fernandes 1981) is the prevalence of a caste consciousness within the Church in contradiction to its egalitarian ideology. The integration of caste norms and hierarchy into Christian social and even ritual behaviour shows that the Church is a divided community and what Beteille (1974: 194) would call a "disharmonic society". According to Beteille, the Constitution has brought about the emergence of an egalitarian ideology and a significant change in what may be called the "normative order". Whereas before patterns of inequality were legitimised by caste or religion, today a growing discrepancy is perceived between the existential order (disparities in income, education and employment opportunities that constitute the social conditions of society) and the normative order which expresses the new values of social justice, human dignity and equality of opportunity. Just as in India the ideological commitment of the normative order to the general welfare of the masses has not brought about any significant improvement in the existential order — on the contrary, social and economic inequalities are increasing and the marginalisation of the common people is a continuing process — so too in the Church, the normative order of

the Gospel with its values of equality, human dignity and preferential option for the poor is challenged by the "existential oder" which is characterised by caste-like segments, ethnic superiority and discrimination based on caste, ethnicity and sex (Kananaikil 1983).

To sum up, the Church as it has evolved through the colonial experience and after independence developed certain orientations that are associated with institutionalisation The maintenance function is emphasised rather than the innovation and leadership functions with the result that the concern is primarily with boundary maintenance or protection of the identity of the group and coping with the fears generated by insecurity as a minority community in what is increasingly perceived to be a hostile majority community. Thus, for example, minority rights have been invoked largely to safeguard Church-related institutions in education and to demand the implementation of Constitutional guarantees of the secular state regarding the right to proclaim and profess one's religion. The various anti-conversion bills have generated considerable insecurity in the Christian community and are interpreted as an expression of hostility of the majority religious community though anti-conversion legislation can also be seen not so much as an anti-Christian device but rather as an attempt by the upper castes and the traditional elites to prevent tribals and Scheduled Castes from access to education and socio-economic improvement which, it is generally believed, becomes accessible to those underprivileged groups with the change of religious affiliation (Fernandes 1982: 33).

The colonial experience and the necessity of government patronage and to set up, maintain and expand the network of social welfare services and institutions has created a tradition of dependency in the Church so that, on the one hand, it appears to be a small but confident minority and, on the other hand, gives strong evidence that the earlier dependence on the colonial power continues after independence as a reflexive tendency to support the government. The "alliance" between the Church and the colonial rulers was a form of what we may call "concession bargaining" where the Church was allowed to continue its work of evangelisation and social welfare in exchange for the support of the political system. Whatever the costs of such bargaining, Christianity has been acclaimed in public for its immense contribution to improving the situation of underprivileged groups such as the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, for making education accessible to women and for providing social welfare services to those in need, and for introducing a spirit of service as an important aspect of

public morality. As J. P. Naik (1967: 134) stated at a conference to an audience of Christian educators in Tambaram:

> One of the best things in the history of modern India has been the confrontation of Hinduism with Christianity, it has been one of the happiest things in the life of Hinduism... Hinduism has learnt one great thing from Christianity I do not attach much importance to how many people accept Christianity as a religion But the idea that Hinduism got from Christianity was that the way of God lies through the service of man. I think this is a new concept to Hinduism We have our ways of Dhyana, Karma, Bhakti, but the emphasis on Seva, the service of man as a method, an important method of realising God, came through our contact with Christianity.

The point I wish to make is that effective as Christianity may have been in responding to the specific challenges of society during the colonial period and immediately after independence, a situation has arisen today in which it is necessary for the Church to make a systematic critique of society so that it may respond to its most urgent needs. In actual fact this is what has happened and it is interesting to see how over the years going back to the seminar on the Church in India Today at Bangalore in the late 60s there has been an endless series of seminars and meetings on reorienting the Church to the changing needs and new challenges of society. Typical of this concern is the Statement of the CBCI on the Church's Response to the Urgent Needs of the Country (1978) and the report of the General Meeting of the National Advisory Council in November 1977.

Political Approach

Given the situation of society today in which there is a growing consciousness of inequality and social injustice, I would like to suggest that Christianity or the Church will become increasingly relevant if it undertakes a major shift in orientation from a social welfare approach to a political approach. As we noted earlier, the tendency of the Church has been to resolve what are political problems at the level of social welfare. Thus the network of social welfare institutions in education, health and development were not the result of a social analysis of society and an understanding of the structural nature of poverty and oppression and social injustice but rather they were a spontaneous humanitarian response to the immediate needs of underprivileged groups of men, women and children. Thus, for example, in health, the Church reproduced the system introduced by the colonial rulers with necessary adjustments for the care of those who were poor and unable to afford high cost institutional care in hospitals. Health was seen quite clearly as an area for social welfare and it is only recently, through a socio-political analysis of the relationship between health and the power structure of society, that a realisation is develop-

ing in the Church that the exclusion of vast masses of people from the health system is the result of decisions made by dominant social groups to mobilise resources for their own interest. Thus, health and even the lowly public health centre is seen today as an expression not of a technical service or social welfare, as it was formerly thought to be, but rather as an entry point for an educational process by which the poor begin to understand the social, economic and political structures of their own society which exclude them from all the resources required for their human growth. Malnutrition, dysentry, respiratory diseases and infection can be termed "oppression diseases" because they are the consequences of a structural situation in which the poor are systematically deprived of food and environmental infrastructure. As several studies of the marketing of drugs in Third World countries emphasise, malnutrition does not need unnecessary and wasteful drugs, multivitamin formulations and tonics but only food and safe drinking water.

Similarly the question of pavement dwellers in Bombay cannot be tackled at the level of social welfare but must be handled as a social problem requiring a political approach. The traditional method adopted by the urban planners with regard to slum and pavement dwellers is to transfer them to the periphery of the city so as to make poverty less visible. But this locational approach to the resettlement of slum and pavement dwellers on the outskirts of the city fails to grasp the basic issues which are economic and political. For what is involved in the eviction of pavement dwellers are the assumptions of urban land policy and the definition of the social use of land by bureaucrats, politicians and those motivated by industrial or commercial interests. The allocation of land to the urban poor is looked upon as an uneconomical use of land, even when the government has taken over urban land ostensibly to make it available to the economically weaker sections of the people. This also raises questions about urban planning and whether the city, its resources and civic services are to be made available only to those who can afford to live in it. While the proliferation of slums and squatter settlements is a consequence of urban planning and the larger economic policies of the government, they also witness to the ineffectiveness of the traditional social welfare approaches to the alleviation of poverty. A deeper analysis of the situation of pavement dwellers in Bombay has now evoked a political response and the issue is currently being resolved in the Supreme Court.

The reasons for the Church's preference for social welfare services and equilibrium concepts of social change is the reluctance to engage in action that may result in violence. I believe that violence must not too easily be accepted as an alternative to social welfare or genuine

social change, since the costs of violence are very high in terms of the destruction of human and physical resources and the difficulty of evolving a constructive reorientation after such traumatic experiences. As Gran (1983: 345) points out:

> To suggest what amounts to a peaceful rule through structural change in a violent and lawless world may strike some as naive or impractical.... Violence wastes resources and blocks development. Guerrilla war is not the only way to mass mobilisation for political actions. Using law creatively as a tool for empowerment, as opposed to a tool for exclusion, oppression and the status quo, is a strategy slowly gaining credence.

The way for individual Christians and Church-related organisations to adopt a political type of intervention on behalf of the underprivileged and the oppressed has been opened recently by the Supreme Court. In its judgement on the Asiad construction labourers (September 18, 1982), the Supreme Court redefined law as an instrument of social change and the Supreme Court of India as the Supreme Court for Indians, particularly the poor who have been so far excluded from the benefits of the legal system. With the reinterpretation of the scope of *locus standi* there is no excuse for individual Christians or Church-related organisations not to take up the causes of the poor and the oppressed by public interest litigation. The case of the Bhagalpur buildings, the pavement dwellers in Bombay, quarry workers in Faridabad, Scheduled Castes involved in the skin and hides in Kanpur region, to name only a few, have all been given relief from bonded labour or unjust and inhuman treatment by the Supreme Court on the intervention of concerned individuals.

A socio-political analysis of the situation in India shows that much more than a social welfare approach is required if the situation of pervasive exploitation and oppression is to be changed. To accomplish this there is need of a systematic and continuous process of legal education so as to raise the political consciousness of the poor and the oppressed and to mobilise them to claim their rights. As Justice Bhagwati has noted (1983: 280):

> What we really need is a legal service programme which is designed to change instead of merely uphold existing law and social structure and particularly the distribution of power within society, because these are the factors which effectively prevent the poor from sharing in the processes and benefits of development. Poverty is the result of our socio-economic institutions, and since law plays a vital part in creating, preserving and protecting these institutions and facilitating their activities, any legal service programme which merely seeks to help the poor in individual cases within the existing framework of the legal system and which does not aim at restructuring the society and reconstructing its socio-economic institutions with a view to eliminating the causes which preserve and perpetuate poverty, involves only a symptomatic

tratment of the disease of poverty and cannot by its very nature be adequate *to combat poverty and make the poor effective participants in the development process.*

Effective public interest litigation has to be part of the broader consciousness of the Church and its involvement in public issues that are agitating society whether in Punjab, Assam, Kerala or Vasco in Goa. There is a reluctance on the part of the Church to be involved in controversial issues and a tendency to avoid public issues which may bring the Church into confrontation with the government or politicians. It is paradoxical that though Christians, as so many have pointed out referring to Mother Teresa, have the image of being deeply involved in society through a variety of social welfare services, the Church is not generally seen to be genuinely committed to society and to use its resources not only for the betterment of its own adherents but for people as such. Though Pope John XXIII was concerned that Christians should have a larger concern for society that should go beyond the boundaries of the Church, the Church in India tends to be motivated by intra-mural interests and to pay attention to the larger public issues only when they have an adverse repercussion on what are considered to be specifically Catholic interests. Urging Christians to be citizens of their society and that the Church itself should share this broader view of the Christian mission, Pope John XXIII said on May 23, 1963:

> Today more than ever, certainly more than in previous centuries, we are called to serve man as such, and not merely Catholics; to defend above all and everywhere the rights of the human person, and not merely those of the Catholic Church. Present day conditions, the demands of the last 50 years, a deeper understanding of doctrine, have led us to new realities, as I said in my opening speech to the Council. It is not that the Gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better.

The situation among the Protestant Churches does not also seem much different from that of the Catholic Church. Devadas (1983: 306) points out "that among the Christian denominations the Churches have no time for national issues as they are busy with their own parochial matters, since the Church is more a Citadel than a *koinonia* of the people of God." The experience during the Emergency of at least the Catholic bishops shows that they are less inclined to align themselves with political authorities and tend rather to side with the poor as they did when coercive family planning measures violated the human freedom and dignity of the poor.

The National Advisory Council (1977: 43) noted a lack of will on the part of the government and apathy of the Christians and stated:

> To counteract corruption and lack of will, efforts at conscientisation should be carried right to the bureaucracy, the government and politicians. Two

suggestions in this matter are: firstly, politicisation of the Christian community. It should become politically aware, alert and active. Secondly, strenuous attempts should be made so that persons (Christians and others), motivated by Christian principles, enter politics and take up responsibility in the Government and the bureaucracy.

Social Analysis

The re-orientation of the Church from social welfare to political action should be accompanied by a new concept of evangelisation, a clearer understanding of the relationship between the religious identity of the Church and its social and political ministry, the development of a new spirituality with a shift from a merely personal morality to a social morality that is expressed in a faith commitment to the poor and oppressed, and finally a widespread process of conscientisation throughout the Church based on systematic social analysisl.

Kunnumpuram's (1983) presentation of the new perspective that is emerging on evangelisation shows the effort now being made to overcome the polarity between social action and evangelisation or pastoral action and social justice. In his encyclical letter "Redeemer of Man", Pope John Paul II proposed what he called the "authentic humanism" defined as solidarity with underprivileged and oppressed men and women in the historical conditions of today. Thus the primary task of the Church is to promote human rights as the Church's mission to the World in which the struggle for justice and freedom from exploitation is an essential part of the evangelising mission of the Church and not subordinated to it as a secondary task. This also implies that there is no distinction between the religious mission of the Church and its humanitarian mission but that both together define the concept of evangelisation as the proclamation of the presence of Christ as redeemer in the concrete struggles of men and women for social justice and human rights. Thus the concept of evangelisation which earlier was identified with the proclamation of the Gospel to expand the membership of the Church is now seen to imply a comprehensive approach which encompasses the action of the Church in a specific social reality so that the Gospel appears as Good News to those suffering from poverty, injustice and oppression.

The reluctance of the Church to recognise the importance of the political dimension of evangelisation is to some extent related to the ambiguity of documents of the Church regarding the relationship between the religious identity of the Church and its social and political ministry (Fiorenza 1982). The Synod of Bishops in 1971 stated emphatically:

> Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world, fully appear to us as a *constitutive* dimension of the preaching of the

Gospel, or in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation.

However, there has been a tendency to look upon the religious mission of the Church as the primary task and the social and political involvement as subordinate to it. Thus, for instance, the substitution of "integral" for "constitutive" seems to suggest the subordination of the social and political ministry of the Church to its religious mission. On the basis of ecclesiastical documents and the views expressed by various theologians, Fiorenza has developed a typology of perspectives on the religious mission of the Church in its relationship to social and political involvement in society. The four main types are: (1) "improper" mission — the social and political mission is improper whereas its proper mission is religious; (2) "substitute" mission — the Church has an authentic social mission but it is either temporary and to be undertaken when the state cannot fulfil its social tasks; (3) "unofficial" mission — overcomes the dichotomy between the religious and social mission by entrusting the humanisation of the world to lay-people who should be inspired and motivated by priests and bishops; (4) "partial" mission — the social and political mission is one of many tasks to be performed by the Church, but it is neither "improper" nor "unofficial" but secondary. In the field of development and theory there has been a shift from polarities to a synthesis that overcomes conceptual opposition through a dialectical process embedded in social reality. However, as the Fiorenza typology implies, many of the assumptions underlying the concepts of evangelisation and religious mission need to be reexamined.

This broader understanding of evangelisation needs to be supported by a new understanding of the spirituality of the Gospel. As Soares (1982:154) points out, "Christian mission cannot be reduced to a merely spiritual proclamation for individual conversion with no social impact on the world." It is seen now that the proclamation of the Gospel is incomplete without the liberation of people and that a purely personal morality is inadequate to reflect the social response of the Christian for the liberation of society from all forms of oppression. This need to promote a new spirituality that enables the Church and individual Christians to break out of isolation and to build bridges to the world has been recently emphasised by Nyerere of Tanzania in an address to the Eight General Assembly of CIDSE (International Cooperation for Socio-Economic Development) in February 1981. He said (1981:277):

Leaders in the Christian Church can set an example of social consciousness and responsibility by their example; very many do so in my experience. But some of them still try to stand aside, and to act as if a good Christian has to

isolate himself or herself from the wider activities of society, or as if a Christian's proper concern is only his personal morality and not that prevailing in the secular institutions of his community Such attitudes are the equivalent of 'walking by on the other side of the road'.

The new emphasis on the Christian spirituality which integrates the social responsibility of the Christian is not yet widely accepted among Christians who interpret salvation in highly personal terms and whose morality has no reference to the social dimension of the Gospel.

To ensure that the Christians are more committed to the Society in which they live it is necessary to undertake a programme of conscientisation throughout the country because conscientisation or awareness that is based on systematic social analysis is perhaps the most effective way of anchoring people in their society. The tendency among Christians has been to assume that things are what they appear to be, a kind of literal phenomenalism, and there is a reluctance to go beyond appearances to identify the structural causes of poverty, injustice and oppression in society. A splendid example of social analysis is "Justice in the World", the Statement of the 1971 Synod of Bishops as well as "Octogesima Adveniens" which derive, from their global and sectoral analysis of society, guidelines for action at all levels from local to international.

What is significant is that social analysis does not necessarily require a highly educated group since even illiterate people can be led to understant the structures that keep them oppressed in their own society. For example, a community health programme for rural women (Kaithathara 1982) uses health as an entry point to make the women aware of the structures of society which exclude them from health care and condemn them to malnutrition, low expectation of life and high infant mortality; it makes them aware of how they are exploited — socially and culturally and particularly in the market place. Thus, the process of learning to cope with diseases becomes the occasion for a conscious understanding of the mechanisms of exploitation in society and for mobilisation for action on societal structures, such as, for example, the money-lender and traders. The tendency in the Church is to think that social analysis is important for Church leaders and decision-makers such as bishops and priests but that it is not necessary for rank and file Christians who look to the Church for religious rather than social guidance. The expressions of popular religion, seen particularly in pilgrimages to shrines located in different parts of the country, tend to foster a personal morality, even though it is expressed in a group context. But popular religion has the potential to develop a social dimension so that social welfare

activities associated with it may take on the characteristics of interventions in society that are political and structural.

Organisational Change

The organisational structure of the Church is hierarchical and it conforms to what Etzioni (1961) calls a "normative" model of a complex organisation. In a normative organisation the kind of power used to obtain compliance is not coercive (physical punishment) nor "utilitarian" (monetary rewards) but symbolic (esteem, prestige, symbolic rewards). In normative organisations the structure of authority requires all the leadership positions to be invested with "charisma" or normative power and, regardless of the leadership shown, they have to be obeyed. In the Church, priests and bishops exercise normative power and lay-people are denied the right to question either their legitimacy or leadership. Because of this, the Church as a normative organisation has a highly centralised authority structure and the cohesion of the Christian community is maintained by unity of faith based on acceptance of a corpus of revealed truths, uniformity of symbolic expression in liturgical celebration and a codified set of norms which prescribes mandatory patterns of ritual and moral behaviour for Catholics throughout the world. The evolution of ecclesiatical legislation has been in the direction of greater centralisation and uniformity notwithstanding differences in social and cultural conditions. The ecclesiastical code of law was considered as an important instrument of the socialisation of Catholics in the norms, values and behaviour identified with membership of the Church.

Two important aspects of this conception of ecclesiastical law should be considered: First, since ecclesiastical law was perceived as a religiously sanctioned form of social control, the emphasis tended to shift from the internalisation of values and internal motivation to the demands for external conformity. This displacement of goals was not infrequently reflected in the conception of faith at the popular level; the commitment of the individual to God appeared to be equated with compliance to the authority of the ecclesiastical power structure that was exercised through the code of Canon Law.

Second, since an absolute character was ascribed to norms which were imposed as the object of obedience, a certain distortion in the moral consciousness of the rank and file Catholics could be observed. For example, a Catholic tended to define himself not in terms of his relationship to Christ but with reference to the prescriptions of ecclesiastical legislation, so that Christianity becomes more a system of observing a divinely sanctioned set of rules. Again differences between

the types of moral behaviour tended to be obscured in a situation in which all kinds of norms were endowed with the same absolute character that was derived from the source of legislation rather than its content. One major consequence of the identification between morality and law has been the tendency to differentiate between Christianity as an "institution" and Christianity as a "world-view". As a world-view Christianity is seen as one of the many competing explanations of life and the world whereas Christianity as an institution is identified with observance of a body of ecclesiastical legislation which is perceived to infringe on the autonomy of the individual. There now appears to be increasingly greater tolerance shown by ecclesiastical authority of diversity of moral interpretation and action because of contextual complexity and because it is not at all easy to legislate with certainty on even fundamental issues. So when ecclesiastical authority imposes norms that do not appear to recognise moral pluralism there is a tendency for the norms to be disregarded and for religious authority to become marginal.

The normative structure of the Church with its hierarchical organisation and specialised pattern of distribution of charism makes it difficult to promote participatory processes in planning, decision-making and implementation. The tendency of a normative organisation like the Church is to assume that initiative is to be exercised by those in leadership positions who are invested with charism and not the rank and file Catholics who are the "objects" of normative power exercised by ecclesiastical cadres such as Bishops and priests. The tendency of the Church as a normative organisation, is therefore to 'go it alone', decisions being made at the top and communicated to the people either as ecclesiastical legislation or prescriptions to be observed in specific situations. Consultation is only now beginning to be accepted in the Church and the preparation for the General Body Meeting of Catholic Bishops (1978) was an example of consultation with various groups in the Church on specific issues dealing with the structure, institutions and service of the Church. The National Advisory Council (1977) pointed out "the tendency of clergy and religious to assume control of activities leaving little margin to the layman." Elsewhere in the same Report it is pointed out that "by and large... the involvement of the laity tends to limit itself to devotional practices and liturgical worship", showing thus "a lack of understanding of the role of laity in the mission of the Church".

The declericalisation of the Church will require the laity to participate in a nation-wide process of conscientisation and to develop a social morality that is consistent with the new perception of the Church

not so much as an institution but as the people of God and the presence of Christ in history. Until a radical change in the organisational structure of the Church takes place it is difficult to see how the Church, understood as the people and not only as the elites, will be able to make a significant contribution to the transformation of the structures of society that currently keep large masses of people, including a large proportion of Christians, powerless and oppressed.

The National Advisory Council (1977:40) notes that individual Christians who have been involved in promoting social justice tend to be for some reason or the other outside the Church. There are action groups of various kinds operating all over the country which are formed by young men and women who are struggling with the poor for their liberation and are bearing witness through their life and work to the Gospel which is intended to liberate not domesticate people. At present there is a conflict between the organised Church and action groups particularly if their leadership is vested in a priest or sister and as a result of this action groups are often rejected by Church officials on the grounds that they are involved in violence or because they demand the freedom to take risks and to challenge government and other oppressive structures in solidarity with the poor — bonded labour, fishermen, tribals and landless labourers and women. As a result of the conflict between action groups and the Church, action groups tend to witness to the power of the Gospel, not in the Church and with it but against the Church and outside it. If action groups are integrated within the Church rather than alienated, they will be able to make the Church increasingly relevant to the masses of people who tend to be by and large excluded from the services of the network of social welfare institutions sponsored by the Church.

Two important considerations arise. First, action groups are characterised by a new orientation to society and use the methodology of systematic social analysis. Thus their work with the people enables the Gospel to be firmly rooted in society and to express concretely the preferential option of the Gospel for the poor. As we pointed out earlier, the Church requires to be much more involved in public issues and in public interest litigation as one aspect of this broader societal concern. Action groups by tackling the problems of bonded labour, social forestry, tribal exploitation, eviction of slum and pavement dwellers, traditional fishermen, quarry workers, exploitation of women and child workers, can help to create a new consciousness within the Church and help in the development among Christians of a social morality consistent with the Gospel. Second, the conflict between

action groups and Church authorities appears to be the outcome of a perception of people as "property". Normative organisations, such as the Church, tend to control behaviour outside the cultic sphere and this together with the concern for religious orthodoxy makes Church leaders act in a way that suggests that people "belong" to the Church *very much as a dispensary or orphanage. At the same time, while Church leaders look upon action groups as one more "property" of the Church*, the norms operating *within traditional Christian institutions* and in action groups give rise to different orientations. In a parish, for example, traditional Church norms tend to emphasise the identity of the parish as a territorial unit and to bind the people to it. The priest who serves the people is oriented by all the norms prescribing appropriate parish priest behaviour to develop organisational loyalty. Thus, in a parish the tendency is for priests and the people to experience a "centripetal" orientation that binds them into a distinctive community within the Church. On the other hand, the norms that have saliency for action groups and their leaders, who often are priests or sisters, are secular with the emphasis on freedom, participation, autonomy and self-reliance and these norms tend to act with a "centrifugal" force that pulls them away from the Church. In view of this tension between the norms of the Church and the norms operating in action groups there is bound to be conflict but it need not necessarily lead to alienation and the writing off of one by the other. How this is to be accomplished in concrete situations is one of the challenges facing both Church leaders and committed social activists.

Conclusion

I have suggested that the colonial experience in the 19th centrury and, after independence, the consciousness of being a minority community, were important factors that shaped the orientation of the Church in India. During the colonial period social welfare services appeared to be the appropriate response to the situation of poverty, illiteracy and ill-health and to function at the same time as instruments of evangelisation. Today, however, there is need of a shift in orientation, if the Church is to be perceived in the service of liberation, from social welfare to a political approach to work out solutions to the problems of poverty, inequality and social injustice. In this new approach the Church is likely to be supported by the courts, particularly the Supreme Court, which earlier were the upholders of the social system and the existing distribution of power in society. The dramatic transformation that has occurred in the orientation of the Supreme Court now makes it a feasible alternative to violence in the struggle for social justice for the poor and the oppressed. The Church was always helpful

to the poor through its social welfare institutions but the political approach will give the Church a new significance because with the people its action will bring about a structural transformation of society.

A political approach indicates a new commitment that extends *beyond the Christian community to the wider society. Such a commitment will not be sustained unless at the same time a concerted effort is made at all levels to clarify the concept of evangelisation and the relationship* between the religious *identity* of *the* Church and its social and political involvement to bring about a shift from a merely personal morality to a social ethic encompassing a new responsibility for society. The profound change in orientation which all this implies will not be possible without an intensive process of conscientisation based on systematic social analysis by which the Church and all Christians will be firmly anchored in the social reality of today. The Church in India has several important social declarations which reflect a socio-political analysis of society, but these declarations are not generally perceived to be implemented. Social analysis as it is practised at the national level appears to be static and to lack the mechanisms to make social analysis an on-going process at all levels of the Church's membership.

I have also indicated the implications of a political orientation for the organisational structure of the Church which will need to be increasingly declericalised and become more participative so that its human resources — particularly women — may be harnessed in this struggle of the Church to liberate sociey from its fears, insecurities and social unjustice. At present, as a normative organisation the structure of authority in the Church tends to promote excessive centralisation so that institution and legislation seem to be more emphasised than decentralisation, autonomy and freedom.

In what could be viewed as a special case, the relationship of the Church with action groups will indicate the capacity of the Church as an institution to integrate the witness value of action groups who are concretely involved in people's struggles for social justice. If the Church continues to marginalise action groups then the witness of action groups will be not in the Church and with the Church but outside the Church and against the Church. The relationship between the Church and action groups indicates the centripetal and centrifugal orientations generated by the way in which two sets of norms function in the religious environment of traditional institutions and the secular arena in which action groups operate. The conflict between Church authorities and action groups may also be an expression of the conflict between privileged groups with vested interests and the underprivileged who are

struggling for social justice. Under the guise of dividing the Church and creating disharmony among Christians, elite groups whithin the Church seek the support of Church authorities to protect their commercial or economic or political interests from the attacks of socials activists who are labelled Marxists or Naxalites or trouuble-makers. Social analysis as a continual process will show that the Church has groups "who can easily have a vested interest in the continuation of the existing unjust situation since they belong to the dominant sections of society, and those who entered the Church as part of their search for liberation from oppression" (Fernandes 1982a·451). Relevance in a historical situation, like freedom, has to be continually won through a process of reflection and action. For Christians will have to reflect on society in the light of the Gospel and through their action on the structures of society reach a new and better understanding of the Gospel. This will enable Christians to identify and weaken the forces of dominance within the Church that have a vested interest in the structures that maintain inequality, discrimination and injustice in our society. Second, the Church will have to develop participatory processes of decision-making so that the resources of all Christians — men and women — are harnessed in the service of the liberation of all people. At the same time, Christians must demonstrate their commitment to society by collaborating with all people of good will, from whatever religious tradition or political ideology they be, in the common task of restoring humanity to the millions of our people who are now compelled to live in conditions of dehumanisation.

REFERENCES

BHAGWATI, P. N., 1983. "Law as Instrument of Change", *Voluntary Action*, 25, nn. 9-10, April-May, pp. 279-284

BETEILLE, André, 1971 "The Social Framework of Agriculture", in Louis LEFEBER and M. DATTA-CHAUDHURI, *Regional Development*: Experiences and Prospect in South and South-East Asia. The Hague Mouton.

BETEILLE, André, 1974. *Studies in Agrarian Social Structure*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

DE SOUZA, Alfred (ed), 1983 *Urban Growth and Urban Planning: Political Context and People's Priorities*. New Delhi· Indian Social Institute.

DEVADAS, H V., 1983. "Christian Response to the New Socio-Political Situation in India", *National Christian Council Review*. CIII, nn. 6-7, June-July, pp. 306-312.

EMMANUEL, KALLARACKAL et al., 1983. *Human Liberation in the Indian Context*. Pune: The Students' Council, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth.

ETZIONI, Amitai, 1961. *A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organisations*. New York: Free Press.

FERNANDES, Walter, 1980. *The Indian Catholic Community*. Brussels: Pro Mundi Vita Dossiers.

FERNANDES, Walter, 1981. *Caste and Conversion Movements in India*. New Delhi: Indian Social Institute.

FERNANDES, Walter, 1982. "Christianity and Social Justice in India: The Mission of the Church", *Lumen Vitae*, 37, n. 4, pp. 442-463.

FIORENZA, Francis S., 1982. "The Church's Religious Identity and its Social and Political Mission", *Theological Studies*, 43, n. 2, June.

GOPALAN, C., 1982. "The 'Population Problem': The Qualitative Dimension", *Inaugural Address, VIII Annual Conference, Indian Association for the Study of* Population, New Delhi, Dec 27, mimeo.

GRAN, Guy, 1983. *Development by People. Citizen Construction of a Just World.* New York. Praeger.

KARLEKAR, Malavika, 1983. "Education and Inequality", in André BETEILLE (ed.), *Equality and Inequality.* New Delhi: Oxford University Press.

KAITHATHARA, Sara, 1982. "Community Health Education: Faith in the Power of the Rural Poor", in H. VOLKEN, A KUMAR and S. KAITHATHARA, *Learning from the Rural Poor* New Delhi Indian Social Institute

KANANAIKIL, Jose, 1983. *Christians of Scheduled Caste Origin.* New Delhi: Indian Social Institute

KANANAIKIL, Jose (ed), 1983a. *Scheduled Castes and the Struggle Against Inequality.* New Delhi· Indian Social Institute.

KRISHNA, Raj, 1980 "The Economic Development of India", *Scientific American*, September, pp. 134-142

KUNNUMPURAM, K., 1983. "Evangelisation in India Today", in *Human Liberation in the Indian Context.* Pune Students' Council, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth.

MAZRUI, Ali A., 1975 "The African University as a Multinational Corporation. Problems of Penetration and Dependency", *Harvard Educational Review*, 45, n. 2, May, pp. 191-210

NAIK, J. P, 1967. "The Role and Problems of Private Enterprise in Education", in *The Christian College and National Development.* Madras Christian Literature Society.

National Advisory Council, 1977. *Report of the General Meeting of the National Advisory Council* Pune, November 3-5

NYERERE, Julius K, 1981 "The Church and Socio-Economic Development in the Context of African Socialism", *AFER*, 23, n. 4, August, pp. 221-231

PRABHU, George M. Soares, 1983. "The Christian Response to the Indian Situation", in *Human Liberation in the Indian Situation.* Pune. Students' Council, Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth.

SEN, Amartya, 1982. "How is India Doing?", *The New York Review*, December 16, pp. 41-45.

SINGH, Andrea and DE SOUZA, Alfred, 1980 *The Urban Poor Slum and Pavement Dwellers in the Major Cities in India* New Delhi Manohar.

New Law on the Sacraments

George V Lobo, S.J

Sacraments in General

THE *sanctifying role of the Church has been deliberately placed right in the middle of the New Code to show that it is central* to the life and mission of the Church The sacraments are no more included among 'Things', but are regarded as the primary means of worship and sanctification within the ecclesial communion. As Vatican II states, it is through the liturgy or the public worship of the Church that "the work of our redemption is exercised. The liturgy is thus the outstanding means by which the faithful can express in their lives and manifest to others, the mystery of Christ and the real nature of the Church "[1] The Council goes on to declare that "the liturgy is the summit toward which the activity of the Church is directed; at the same time it is the fountain from which all her power flows "[2]

As liturgical rites are "not private actions, but celebrations of the Church" (Can. 837), they are to be celebrated with the participation of the faithful (Can. 837) and are to be moderated by ecclesiastical authority (Can 838, 1). However, the meagre role the New Code accords to the diocesan bishops and episcopal conferences (Can. 838, 3, 4 and 841) does not seem to fully correspond with the principle of subsidiarity and the stress on the local Church in Vatican II.

While the liturgy includes other rites like funerals, its core is the celebration of the seven sacraments Can. 840 rightly expresses their proclamatory, worshipping, sanctifying and unifyirg role.

Baptism is declared to be the basis for other sacraments (Can. 842, 1). The unity of the Christian initiation through Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist is stressed (Can. 842, 2). While the right of the faithful to receive the sacraments is acknowledged, the need for adequate evangelisation and catechetical instruction is also emphasized (Can. 843).

The norms for sacramental sharing with non-Catholic Christians have been largely taken over from the Ecumenical Directory issued

1. Constitution *Sacrosanctum Concilium* on the Sacred Liturgy, n. 2.
2. Ibid., n. 10.

by the Secretariat for promoting Christian Unity in 1967.[3] However, there no longer is need for particular circumstances, like the persons being otherwise deprived of the sacraments for a notable time, in order to give the sacraments of the Eucharist, Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick to Oriental non-Catholics. It is enough that they freely ask for them and are rightly disposed (Can. 844, 3). Such giving of sacraments and also receiving of sacraments in certain circumstances *by Catholics from non-Catholic ministers is extended also to Western non-Catholics who have valid sacraments, for instance, the so-called Old Catholics in Holland. From the wording of the Canon it seems that we may give the sacraments to the Marthomites, but may not receive them from their ministers as they are Oriental non-Catholics* but whose Orders are doubtfully valid.

The sacraments may be given to other non-Catholic Christians only in the danger of death or in other grave need according to the judgment of the diocesan bishop or the episcopal conference. Besides having the right disposition, they must manifest the Catholic faith regarding these sacraments (Can. 844, 4). The diocesan bishop or episcopal conference are not to make any general norms in this matter without consultation with the corresponding non-Catholic authority. One of the instances of grave need may arise in the matter of giving Communion to the non-Catholic partner during an inter-Church wedding.

The Code insists on the faithful observance of the rites prescribed in the liturgical books (Can. 846, 1). This is meant to ensure the respect due to the sacraments as well as to avoid unseemly quarrels among people with different views and sensibilities. But it should not block sane experimentation with proper authorization according to the spirit of Vatican II. The Code as well as the liturgical books themselves suggest adaptations in certain cases.

It is said that the minister is to use his own rite in the celebration of the sacraments (Can. 846, 2). Obviously, an Oriental rite priest working in a Latin diocese will use the Latin rite, and, where the case arises, vice versa. There is still the problem of the faithful of one rite residing in the territory of another. This could perhaps be solved to some extent by the faculty of biritualism.

In line with the New Rituals, the Code permits the use of vegetable oils other than olive oil (Can. 847). This is an important point for local adaptation in order to have a more inculturated symbolism.

---

3. *Ad Totam Ecclesiam*, 14 May 1967, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 574-592.

Baptism

Baptism is considered the door to other sacraments and necessary for salvation 'either in fact or in desire' (Can 849). Even while acknowledging the salvific value of other religions, the Church wants to make it clear that all people are called to belong to Christ in his Church through Baptism, however remote this goal may seem to be.

It is a pity that the proposal to call Baptism the 'sacrament of faith' was later dropped.[4] This has special relevance in the celebration of Baptism, especially in the case of infants

There is special emphasis on the preparation for Baptism. In the case of adults,[5] the progressive catechetical and liturgical initiation is prescribed, although with the mitigating clause 'as far as possible' (Can. 851, 1°). This is described in the New Rite for Christian Initiation of Adults According to the Canon, it is to be adapted by the episcopal conference. The restoration of the Catechumenate is one of the main points that Vatican II specially urged.[6]

In the case of infants, it is the parents and the godparents who need to be instructed as it is particularly in their faith that the infants are baptized and it is they who have the primary responsibility for their Christian upbringing (Can. 851, 2°) This calls for the renewal of pastoral practice Some means like common prayer sessions and meetings of several parents as well as home visits by the pastor are suggested.

The reference to Baptism by aspersion in Can 854 has been omitted. It is because this practice, now maintained by few Churches like the Coptic, does not sufficiently bring out the symbolism of Baptism as insertion into the death and resurrection of Christ, apart from the danger of water not even touching a particular person — not to speak of water 'flowing'.

The prescriptions regarding the time and place of Baptism (Can. 856-60) are meant to bring home the idea of incorporation, not only into the universal Church, but also into the local community. It is suggested that, as a rule, Baptism be celebrated in one's *proper* parish, although it may be celebrated in another for a just reason (Can. 857, 2).

Normally Baptism is to be conferred in the parish church or in another church or oratory where there is a baptismal font. It may

4. *Communicationes* 13 (1981), p 213

5 Adult Baptism is deliberately spoken of before Infant Baptism so that the need for preparation may come out more clearly. See *Communicationes* 13 (1981), p. 214. Cf. also Can 865, 1.

6. Cf. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n 66 and Decree *Ad Gentes* on the Church's Missionary Activity, n 14. Although the New Rite was issued in 1972, the liturgical catechumenate has not yet been seriously adopted in many places.

be conferred in another church or oratory to avoid grave inconvenience (Can. 859). The provision 'or even in another decent place' has been deliberately added to provide for needs in mission territories.[7]

Now the deacon is included among the ordinary ministers of Baptism (Can. 861, 1) as is also the case for Communion, Benediction, Funerals and assistance at Marriages. In the absence of a priest or deacon, a catechist, another person deputed by the bishop or ultimately any person may administer the sacrament. Hence pastors are asked to instruct the faithful in the manner of doing it (Can. 861, 2)

It is suggested that the Baptism of adults be referred to the bishop who is to administer it himself if he thinks it opportune. This is partly because the bishop is the head of the local Church, and partly because Confirmation is to be administered together with Baptism for adults (cf. Can. 866 and 883, 2°). The administration of Confirmation immediately after Baptism is not optional as can be seen from the dropping of the proposed phrase "unless there is a grave reason".[8]

The Code again insists that an adult is to be sufficiently instructed regarding the truths of faith and Christian obligations. He is to be tested by a catechumenate regarding Christian life (Can. 865, 1). In the danger of death, he must somehow manifest the awareness of the basic truths of faith and the promise to live according to Christian demands (Can. 865, 2).

The parents are to have their children baptized during "the first weeks" (Can. 867, 1). But there should be no unseemly haste since a proper preparation of the family and the participation of the parents is normally required.[9]

The parents themselves are urged to approach the pastor even before the birth of the child to ask for Baptism and be properly prepared for the event. This particularly refers to dechristianized areas.

For the Baptism of infants the consent of at least one parent or guardian is required. There must be a solid hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic faith. If this is lacking, Baptism is to be deferred with the reason given to the parents (Can. 868, 1). The Canon refers to particular law because in some countries there are detailed regulations in this matter. Thus in France, if the disposition of the parents is insufficient to guarantee the Catholic upbringing of

---

7. *Communicationes* 13 (1981), p. 218.
8. Ibid., p. 222.
9. "As soon as possible" in earlier drafts has been changed to "during the first weeks". See ibid., p. 223.

the child, Baptism is to be deferred, but the child's name is to be entered in a special register and the priest is to give a simple blessing to the child.

According to Can. 868, 2, a child of Catholics or non-Catholics in the danger of death is licitly baptized even without the consent of the parents (Can. 868, 2). At this critical moment, Mother Church is supposed to take over the role of the parents in this matter. The draft had two exceptions: 1) "unless both the parents are expressly against it"; 2) "unless there is danger of hatred against religion".[10] Such considerations seem to be left to the person baptizing.

On account of the respect due to the sacrament and its indelible character, in case of doubt about its conferral or validity, it may be repeated under condition only if the doubt remains after serious investigation (Can. 869, 1). This has particular application to Baptism administered in some non-Catholic ecclesial communities. It is to be presumed valid and is not to be repeated even conditionally unless, after examining the matter and form and the intention of the minister and receiver, there is serious doubt about its validity (Can. 869, 2).

A foundling is to be baptized unless serious investigation proves the child's Baptism (Can. 870). A live aborted fetus is to be baptized as far as it is possible (Can. 871). There is no reference in the New Code to intra-uterine Baptism or Baptism during the process of delivery.

Although the primary role of the parents in presenting the child for Baptism is stressed, the law still requires, as far as possible, the presence of one or two godparents who will help in the Christian upbringing of the child. They are to be properly chosen (Can. 872).

The godparent is supposed to be a Catholic who has been confirmed and has received Holy Communion, besides leading a life suitable for his or her role (Can. 874, 3). According to the Ecumenical Directory, one belonging to an Oriental non-Catholic ecclesial community could assume the function of an additional godparent.[11] Now it is said that a non-Catholic, whether Oriental or not, can only act as a witness together with the Catholic godparents (Can. 874, 2).

Confirmation

Without taking a position on disputed theological opinions, the New Code speaks of Confirmation as a further step in Christian initiation by which the baptized are "endowed with the gift of the Holy Spirit and bound more perfectly to the Church, are strengthened and

10. Ibid., p. 224.
11. N. 48.

more strictly obliged by word and action to be witnesses of Christ and to spread and defend the faith" (Can. 879).

The idea that the ordinary minister of Confirmation is the bishop is reaffirmed. But the scope for presbyteral Confirmation is widened. The following are empowered to confirm by the law itself: 1) those who in law are equivalent to a diocesan bishop in the territory; 2) a priest who by virtue of his office or mandate of the diocesan bishop baptizes an adult or receives a baptized adult into full communion with the Catholic Church; 3) the parish priest, or even any priest, regarding one who is in the danger of death (Can. 883).

Further, if necessary the bishop may empower one or more priests to administer the sacrament (Can. 884, 1).

For a grave reason, for example because of the large number of persons to be confirmed, the bishop or the priest empowered in any way to confirm may in each case associate other priests in the conferring of the sacrament (Can. 884, 2).

While a bishop can always validly administer Confirmation anywhere, even though he needs at least the presumed permission of the diocesan bishop of the place, a priest outside the danger of death may not validly confirm in another territory (Can. 886, 2; 887).

There is again an emphasis on proper preparation for the sacrament (Can. 889, 2; 890). Although the Code does not explicitly speak of the need for instructing also the parents, this is often necessary.

The Code does not take a definite stand on the question of the most suitable time for the sacrament. It says that the faithful must receive it in due time and pastors and parents must see to this (Can. 890). It also suggests that the sacrament must be given about the age of discretion, "unless the episcopal conference decides otherwise, or there is danger of death, or any other grave reason in the mind of the minister" (Can. 891). Here the minister is given wide latitude unless the episcopal conference or diocesan bishop have made clear regulations in the matter.

It would be good to note that there are widely different practices in different Churches. Most Orientals confirm immediately after Baptism even in the case of infants. In countries like Spain, the sacrament is conferred some time before first Communion in order to preserve the order of the rites of Christian initiation. In Germanic countries, the tendency is to delay the sacrament till adolescence so that Confirmation becomes a sacrament of Christian maturity. In mission countries generally confirmation is given some years after first

Communion in order to allow for another cycle of catechism and a more personal renewal of baptismal promises. This arrangement has definite psychological advantages but breaks the natural sequence of the rites of initiation. There is need for a more thorough study of this whole question so that the sacrament may become truly meaningful and efficacious. The point of view of the Orientals seeing the sacrament as an objective consecration should be considered. On the other hand, there is much to be said for the view that the sacrament is one of Christian maturity and witness, although nowadays even small children have to face challenges to their faith and are called upon to witness to it.

The New Code like the Old wants that there be a sponsor for Confirmation too (Can. 892). This must not be a mere formality. The person chosen must really be able to help in witnessing to the faith and in living out the obligations of one who has undergone one more stage of Christian initiation. It would be desirable that the sponsor be the same as for Baptism (Can. 893, 2).

Eucharist

After a lot of discussion the introductory Canon has succeeded fairly well in summarizing the doctrine on the Eucharist. Being the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection, it is the climax and source of the whole Christian cult and life. All other sacraments and the Church's apostolate are to be referred to it (Can. 897). The traditional tripartite division of sacrifice, presence and communion is preserved, although an attempt has been made to see that these elements are not disjointed The active participation of all the members of the Church, clerical and lay, is stressed, although only the celebrating priest is called the minister (Can. 899, 900).

There no longer is any restriction to offering the Mass for any person, living or dead (Can. 901).

It is regretable that concelebration is only said to be allowed (Can. 902). The Code Commission had suggested that it be called commendable.[12] Indeed a host of earlier documents encouraged it since "it manifests the unity of the priesthood".[13] The rite also brings out better the unity of the one sacrifice of Christ and that of the entire people of God.

12. *Communicationes* 13 (1981), p 239

13. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n 57. Cf. Decree *Presbyterorum Ordinis* on the Ministry and Life of Priests, n. 8, Decree of S.C. of Rites, on Concelebration and Communion under Both Species, *Ecclesiae Semper*, 7 March 1965, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 57 (1965), pp. 410–411; Instruction of S.C. of Rites, *Eucharisticum Mysterium*, on the Worship of the Eucharistic Mystery, 25 May 1967, n. 47, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 565-566; Declaration of S.C. for Divine Worship, *In Celebratione Missae*, 7 August 1972, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 60 (1972), pp. 561-563.

Daily celebration is strongly recommended to priests. It is said that "even if the presence of the faithful cannot be had, it is an act of Christ and the Church performing which they will fulfil their main role as priests" (Can. 904). However, the priest is not supposed to celebrate Mass without the participation of someone unless for a "good and reasonable" cause (Can. 906). There is need for a balance between the extreme practices of some who regularly celebrate without anyone assisting and others who would celebrate only if there is a congregation.

As in the old discipline, the local Ordinary may grant the faculty of bination, and even of trination on Sundays and Holy Days of obligation (Can. 905, 2). Through Decennial Faculty, n. 6, the bishop may permit trination even on weekdays in mission territories.

Concelebration with a minister of a community not having full communion with the Catholic Church is forbidden (Can. 908). This is because the rite would not correspond with the reality of division among the Churches even when there already is a large measure of unity.

The prescription of thanksgiving *after* Mass for priests (Can. 909) does not seem to take into account the provision for silence immediately after Communion within the celebration or the need for the pastor to meet his people immediately after Sunday Mass.

Now the deacon too is an ordinary minister of Holy Communion. Extraordinary ministers are acolytes or other lay people deputed for the purpose (Can. 910). Women too may be deputed, but not with a liturgical rite as in the case of men installed in lay ministries (Can. 230). The provision of lay people being able to distribute Communion takes away one of the oft mentioned difficulties in the way of extending Communion under both species. It should also permit the celebration to be concluded within a reasonable time.

The extant discipline regarding First Communion of children is retained (Can. 912-913). The requirement of sacramental confession before First Communion is put in a clause (Can. 914).[14] While there are definite advantages in this traditional practice, there are also grave difficulties in it. Hence the matter need not be treated as closed. Further reflection and eventual change remains possible.

Those who are conscious of grave sin are not to celebrate or receive Communion without sacramental confession, "unless there is a grave reason and there is no opportunity to confess". In the

14. See Declaration of S.C. for the Discipline of the Sacraments, *Sanctus Pontifex*, on First Confession and First Communion, 24 May 1973, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 65 (1973), p. 410.

latter case "the person is to remember the obligation to make an act of perfect contrition, which includes the resolve to go to confession as soon as possible" (Can. 916). This requirement prescribed by the Council of Trent is meant to ensure proper disposition for the sacrament.[15] It would not appear too great an obstacle to frequent Communion if grave sin is properly understood as a change in a person's fundamental option.

One who has already received Holy Communion may receive it again on the same day "only within a eucharistic celebration in which the person participates" (Can 917) There is no more need of any other circumstance

It is highly recommended that Communion be received within the Mass However, it is not to be denied to those who ask for it outside for a good reason (Can 918) The relationship of Communion with the eucharistic celebration has to be always maintained. But it is not necessary that the relationship be material.

The discipline regarding the Eucharistic fast has been retained in order to foster reverence for the Spiritual Bread. One has to abstain for an hour before Communion from all food and drink, apart from water and medicine. A priest who has to celebrate again may take something in between even if there is no gap of one hour. The aged and the sick as well as those who care for them are not bound by the fast (Can. 919)

The precept of annual Communion is reaffirmed. But there no longer is need for the bishop extending the paschal season since it may be received at some other time for a just cause (Can. 920, 1).

Likewise, the faithful are bound to receive Communion as Viaticum or food for the last journey in danger of death. It is recommended that they do so even if they have already received Communion that day (Can. 921) Pastors must take care that it is received when the sick person is fully conscious (Can 922).

Regarding Communion under both species, the Code refers to liturgical laws (Can. 925). Vatican II had opened the way to this renewed practice in the Latin Church.[16] The Instruction *Eucharisticum Mysterium* of 1967 had explained its significance in a fuller way. Under this form "the sign of the eucharistic banquet appears more perfectly. Moreover, it is more clearly shown how the new and

15. Session XIII, Decree on the Most Holy Eucharist, Can. 11, in J. NEUNER and J. DUPUIS, *The Christian Faith*, Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 4th ed., 1982, n. 1536.

16. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 55.

eternal Covenant is ratified in the Blood of the Lord as it also expresses the relation of the eucharistic banquet to the eschatological banquet in the Kingdom of the Father."[17] The Instruction then gave a list of cases when communion under both kinds is permitted.

A more extensive list is provided in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal. There is wider provision for the practice in case of concelebration. Both species may be given to all who perform some genuine liturgical function, to all the seminarians and all who dwell in a religious house when the concelebration is had in the religious chapel.

An Instruction of the S.C. for Divine Worship, *Sacramentali Communione*, 29 June 1970, states that the episcopal conference may further decide to what extent and under what conditions ordinaries may concede Communion under both kinds, provided the faculty is not given indiscriminately.[18] The CBCI in its meeting in Madras in 1972 left the matter to the local Ordinaries.[19]

The progressive liberalization shows that it is an ongoing process. The Holy See is anxious to defend the doctrine of Trent that the whole Christ is present under the species of bread or any part of the consecrated host. It is also eager to prevent any abuse or irreverence that might arise if Communion under both species is given indiscriminately to large numbers of people without preparation. That is why, according to recent reports, the Holy See is particularly displeased with the generalized permission given in some dioceses of the United States. However, while the reasons for caution are valid, there should be equal desire to extend a practice that brings out the full significance of the Lord's Supper.

The Code reaffirms the absolute prohibition to consecrate one species without the other or both outside the eucharistic celebration (Can. 927). The first would expose the consecration to invalidity since it would radically fall short of the symbolism of the Eucharist as the memorial of the Lord's death and resurrection. The second would betray a very mechanistic idea of the Eucharist in which the double consecration gets its meaning only from the full celebration, especially the liturgy of the Word, the offertory and the anaphora.

The requirement of vestments prescribed by the rubrics (Can. 929) should be taken together with the provision of the General Introduction of the Roman Missal according to which episcopal conferences may

17. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 358.
18. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 62 (1970), pp. 664-667.
19. *Report of the General Meeting*, CBCI, 1972, p. 64.

determine and propose to the Holy See adaptations in the shape and style of the vestments which they consider desirable because of local customs and needs. We have still to go a far way in such matters. According to Decennial Faculty, n. 5, the local Ordinaries may allow priests the use of vestments of any liturgical colour for a just cause. Some examples would be, while travelling, or when several priests have to celebrate and vestments of the same colour are not available, or when for the sake of solemnity, the best vestments are used.

Although normally Mass has to be celebrated in a sacred place, it may be done elsewhere in a decent place in case of particular necessity (Can 932, 1). Outside a sacred place, it is enough to have a convenient table with a cloth and corporal (Can 932, 2). There is no more need of an altar stone or antemensium. Nothing is said about the earlier exclusion of a bedroom as a fitting place.

The Canons regarding the preservation of the Blessed Sacrament strike a balance between the respect due to it and the different circumstances in various places (Can. 934-940).

Can 941, 1 allows exposition in churches and oratories in which the Blessed Sacrament is preserved with either the monstrance or the ciborium The norms prescribed in liturgical books have to be kept. There is no reference to the permission of the local Ordinary regarding number or frequency. Of course, the Ordinary has the responsibility of general supervision to ensure that everything is done with proper reverence and decorum. It is for the bishop to encourage a devotion that "stimulates the faithful to an awareness of the marvellous presence of Christ, and is an invitation to spiritual communion with him. It is therefore an excellent encouragement to offer him that worship in spirit and truth which is his due" Care must also be taken that "during those expositions the worship given to the Blessed Sacrament should be seen, by signs, in its relation to the Mass."[20]

The law now provides that the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament may be done not only by priests and deacons, but also by acolytes and others with the authorisation of the local Ordinary. However, only priests or deacons may give the blessing (Can. 943).

The practice of receiving a stipend by a priest who celebrates or concelebrates Mass is again approved; at the same time it is earnestly recommended that priests offer the sacrifice for the intentions of the people, especially for the needy, even if they receive no stipend (Can. 945).

---

20. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), p. 570.

The significance of stipends or Mass offerings, briefly touched upon in Can. 946, has been explained more fully in the Apostolic Letter, *Firma in Traditione*, 15 June 1974.

> *Through mass offerings the faithful, desiring in a religious and ecclesial spirit to participate more intimately in the Eucharistic Sacrifice, add to it a form of sacrifice of their own by which they contribute in a particular way to the needs of the Church, and especially to the sustenance of its ministers .... This practice by which the faithful unite themselves more closely with* Christ offering himself as a victim, thus deriving more abundant fruit from the sacrifice, has not merely been approved but has been positively encouraged by the Church. It is regarded as a sign of the union of the baptized with Christ and of the faithful with the priest who exercises his ministry for their good.[21]

A lot of abuses are possible and hence the law warns that "any kind of business or trade with Mass stipends is to be altogether avoided" (Can. 947).

The Code repeats the norms regarding the obligation in justice of offering Masses according to the stipends received (Can. 948-950). Apart from Christmas Day, the priest may receive for himself only one stipend. If he accepts stipends for binated or trinated Masses, he has to hand over the amount for the purpose determined by the Ordinary, while keeping some compensation 'on the ground of an extrinsic title', e.g., if there are travel or other expenses involved in the celebration (Can. 951, 1). A stipend may never be received for a second mass concelebrated on the same day (Can. 951, 2). Religious priests too are bound by the above norms (Can. 952, 3).

The rate of stipends is to be fixed by the council or meeting of the bishops of the ecclesiastical province, and priests may not demand a higher amount. However, they may accept a higher or lower amount that is spontaneously offered (Can. 952, 1). It seems that the bishop may require all stipends received by the diocesan clergy to be sent to the Curia or prescribe that they have to celebrate a certain number of Masses a month 'for the intentions of the bishop' when the priests depend on the diocese for their sustenance. This would also prevent odious differences between those who receive high amounts through stipends and others who do not.

The Code insists that the priests be careful in noting the stipends they have received, in transmitting them to others and in celebrating the Masses within reasonable time (Can. 953-956). No one should accept more than can be celebrated within the year (Can. 953) and all administrators of pious causes who receive stipends must hand over the excess to their Ordinary.

21. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 66 (1974), p. 308.

The bishop has the right to reduce the obligation of foundati Masses if the income from the foundation diminishes (Can. 1308). In order to avoid such complication, it is better to accept the obligation of celebrating the number of Masses proportionate to the income from the foundation.

Reconciliation

Although the aspect of reconciliation is brought out in the preliminary Can. 959, the title 'Sacrament of Penance' is unfortunately retained.

The obligation of individual and integral confession of all grave sins is reaffirmed. Only physical or moral impossibility is said to excuse (Can. 960).

The occasions when general absolution without individual confession may be given are the same as found in the Introduction to the *New Rite of Reconciliation*, 1973. The judgment whether such circumstances exist belongs to the bishop (Can. 961). The faithful who receive such absolution must not only be properly disposed, but must have the intention of confessing any grave sins later when possible (Can. 962, 1; 963).

However, note must be taken of the fact that in both the earlier document and Can. 961, 1, 2° general absolution may be given when the number of penitents is such that individual confessions cannot be heard *properly* (*rite*) within *due* (*congruum*) time. It is better to impart general absolution than to hurry over individual confessions which would manifest a mechanistic spirit. About this matter as well as the possible extension of general absolution I may refer to my book, *Renewal of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.*[22]

The Code states that "the proper place for hearing sacramental confessions is a church or oratory" (Can. 964, 1). A confessional must be established with a grille in an open place so that those who wish may freely have access to it. Details are to be determined by the episcopal conference (Can. 964, 2). Confessions may, however, be heard outside the confessional 'for a just cause' (Can. 964, 3).

The preoccupation of the Code to prevent abuses and to ensure discretion is understandable. But the excessive insistence on the confessional with the grille is not conducive to the renewal of individual confession. A proper dialogue and the rite of imposition of hand is scarcely possible in such a setting. It is also unfortunate that the Code

22. Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 2nd ed., 1981.

has no reference to the communal celebration of the sacrament with *individual confession. It would have been helpful if this practice which is already bearing much fruit was explicitly encouraged.*

The principle of the requirement of faculties besides the power of priestly order has been reaffirmed (Can. 966, 1). However, a big change has been introduced inasmuch as any priest who has the faculty by virtue of office (e.g., the parish priest), or of concession by the local Ordinary of the place of incardination or domicile, may exercise the same *anywhere* in the world (Can. 967, 2).

The local Ordinary may confer the faculty to hear confessions to any priest (Can. 969), although as has been already stated, this is a valid basis to hear confessions elsewhere only if the priest is incardinated in the diocese or has his domicile there. The Ordinary is also asked not to grant faculties to a strange priest without consulting, as far as possible, the Ordinary of the priest. The whole idea in the new discipline is that normally a priest must obtain faculties from an Ordinary of a place where he has a base and then may hear confessions anywhere in the world. If such a faculty is revoked, the priest cannot hear confessions elsewhere (Can. 974, 2).

If a religious priest has no faculty from the local Ordinary, he may still obtain faculty from his superior to hear the confessions of all his confreres as well as those who dwell in the house day and night (Can. 969, 2). This would also apply when a religious priest is transferred from one diocese to another and has not yet obtained faculties from the bishop of his new diocese. But this situation could be better provided for by the bishops of a country, or at least region, agreeing that a newly arrived religious priest has faculties in the new diocese for a week or so, provided he had faculties from the bishop of the diocese where he previously served.

As in the old law, in the moment of death, one may receive absolution from any validly ordained priest whatsoever, even if another approved priest is present (Can. 976).

The discipline on 'absolution of an accomplice in sexual sin' remains unchanged (Can. 977). It is invalid apart from the danger of death. The priest who attempts such an absolution incurs ipso facto excommunication reserved to the Holy See (Can. 1378, 1).

The confessor is exhorted to be the sign of both God's justice and mercy in order to promote the glory of God and the good of souls (Can. 978, 1). He is to follow the doctrine and norms of the Church in guiding the penitents (Can. 978, 2).

Some old suggestions like that of prudence are given (Can. 979). It would have been helpful if the importance of psychology and counselling had also been stressed.

The suggestions regarding the so-called 'penance' assigned by the confessor are too much marked by outmoded expressions like 'satisfaction' (Can. 981). This whole custom needs to be renewed understanding the prescription by the confessor as 'help for renewal'.[23]

The obligation of a penitent to denounce a confessor who uses the occasion to seduce the person towards a sin against chastity has been happily dropped since it was the cause of much disquiet to some penitents However, one who makes such a denunciation falsely is not to be absolved unless he/she first formally withdraws the accusation and is ready to repair the damage (Can. 982). The same person incurs ipso facto an interdict (Can. 1390, 1). The confessor guilty of the offence mentioned is to be punished according to the gravity of the case, and in more serious cases by being reduced to the lay state (Can. 1387).

The strict discipline regarding violation of the seal of confession or the use of confessional matter for external government has been maintained (Can. 983; 984).

There are no more reserved sins as such. This institute had become practically obsolete. Now there is only one kind of censures reserved to the Holy See which are nearly the same as those previously reserved *specialissimo modo*. The rest of the ipso facto penalties are by implication reserved to the local Ordinary, who may, however, empower the confessor to absolve from them. An example would be the ipso facto excommunication incurred by those who bring about abortion (Can. 1398).

The obligation of confessors to hear the confessions of those in need (Can. 986, 2) has now a special significance because of the unwillingness of some to do so.

In order to avoid a mechanistic idea of confession, the need for proper disposition on the part of the penitent is rightly stressed (Can. 987).

The obligation of confessing all grave sins committed after Baptism and not yet directly forgiven in sacramental confession is reaffirmed (Can. 968, 1). This obligation, solemnly proclaimed by the Council of Trent,[24] will not appear too odious if one understands the true meaning and seriousness of grave sin.

23. Cf. Op. cit., ch. 7.

24. Session XIV, Decree on the Sacrament of Penance, Can. 11, in J. Neuner and J. Dupuis, op. cit., n. 1647.

Again the precept of annual confession is reaffirmed (Can. 989). It directly binds only those who are guilty of grave sin. However, nowadays the stress should be not so much on confessing grave sins, as using this sacrament for reconciliation and renewal of Christian life.

At the end of the chapter on Reconciliation, the Code has some canons on Indulgences. These summarize the new discipline introduced by the Apostolic Constitution, *Indulgentiarum Doctrina*, 1 January 1967.[25] The initial canon on the significance of indulgences could have been better worded (Can. 992).

Now there are only plenary and partial indulgences, without any computation of days or years in the latter. They are said to liberate partially or totally from the temporal pain due to sin (Can. 993). Here again the wording leaves much to be desired. Personal disposition as well as ecclesial communion are not sufficiently brought out. It is a pity that an opportunity has been lost to renew this institute in the Church.

Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick

The preliminary Canon declares that by the Anointing of the Sick, the sick person is conformed to the suffering and glorious Lord and is comforted and saved (Can. 998). It would have been good to use the word 'healed' also.

Now the priest may bless the oil for the anointing in the case of need. This is to be done during the celebration (Can. 999).

The Code refers to the liturgical books for the manner of anointing (Can. 1000).[26] Common celebration is permitted (Can. 1002). It would have been better to recommend it.

According to present doctrine, only the priest is said to be the minister of the sacrament. It is the duty and right of those who have pastoral care over the persons concerned. However, for a reasonable cause, any priest may anoint at least with the presumed consent of those mentioned above. Any priest may now carry with him the oil for the anointing so as to be able to administer the sacrament in case of necessity.

In line with Vatican II,[27] the anointing may be given to the faithful who, "having attained the use of reason, begin to be in danger, because of sickness or old age" (Can. 1004). In doubt whether the person has

25. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 59 (1967), pp. 5-24.
26. See *Order of Anointing of the Sick and their Pastoral Care*, 1972.
27. *Sacrosanctum Concilium*, n. 73.

attained the use of reason or is dangerously sick, or is dead, the sacrament is to be given (Can. 1005). Thereby, the sacrament is meant normally to be a means of healing for the sick; but it is also meant to be of comfort for those who are dying.

The sacrament is to be given to those who asked for it, at least implicitly, when they were conscious (Can. 1006). But it is not to be given to those who manifestly and obstinately persevere in grave sin (Can. 1007). There is room here for great leniency as it is very difficult to make such a judgment.

Holy Orders

The preliminary canon makes it clear that by divine institution some among the faithful are constituted sacred ministers by an indelible character, that is, those who are consecrated and deputed so that, each according to his grade, they may fulfil the role of teaching, sanctifying and ruling the people of God (Can. 1008).[28]

As definitely clarified by Vatican II, the three grades of the sacrament of Holy Orders are the episcopate, presbyterate and diaconate (Can. 1009, 1).[29] The unique minister of all the Orders is the bishop (Can. 1012) who, however, may never consecrate another bishop without the mandate of the Pope (Can. 1013).

For ordaining a priest or deacon, the bishop requires dimissorial letters from the candidate's Ordinary if the candidate is not his subject (Can. 1015, 1; 1019, 1). These may be sent to any bishop in communion with the Holy See. However, a bishop may not ordain a candidate from a rite different from his without an apostolic indult, even if he is subject to him (Can. 1015, 2; 1021).

As was to be expected, the subject of valid ordination is said to be only a baptized man (Can. 1024).[30]

For licit ordination to the priesthood and diaconate, one must be approved according to the norms of the law, have the requisite qualities according to the judgment of one's bishop or major superior, be free from any irregularity or impediment, have the pre-requisites like Confirmation, Ministry of Lector and Acolyte according to the norms of Can. 1033-1039. He must also produce the required documents (Can. 1050) and pass the scrutinies mentioned in Can. 1051

28. Constitution *Lumen Gentium* on the Church, n. 10.
29. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 21.
30. According to a recent Declaration of the S.C. for the Doctrine of the Faith, *Inter Insiniores*, *15 October 1976*, women cannot be ordained because of the example and normative practice of Christ and the Apostles. See *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 69 (1977), pp. 98-106.

(Can. 1025, 1). Space does not permit a detailed discussion of all prescriptions. Only a few can be touched upon.

The candidate for the priesthood should be 25 years old, for the diaconate (on the way to priesthood) 23 years. The bishop may dispense up to one year (Can. 1031).

An aspirant to the priesthood can be promoted to the diaconate only after finishing a quinquennium of philosophico-theological studies. Before the priesthood he should spend some suitable time in exercising the diaconate (Can. 1032, 1 and 2) and pass an interval of six months (Can. 1031, 1).

Irregularities (perpetual impediments) and other simple impediments have been somewhat simplified. Illegitimacy no longer constitutes an *irregularity*. There is now *no impediment* because the candidate is a son of non-Catholic parents and "they persevere in their error". The dispensation from the irregularity arising from voluntary homicide or procured abortion is still reserved to the Holy See even if the crime is occult (Can. 1047, 2, 2°).

In urgent cases when the Ordinary or the Sacred Penitentiary cannot be approached one who is irregular for the exercise of his order may exercise it with the obligation of recurring to the proper authority as soon as possible (Can. 1048). The old law required the intervention of a confessor.

Forum

Ecumenism and Social Awareness

The last July issue of VIDYAJYOTI had two very good articles on the life of the Church in India today; one was by Fr Walter Fernandes, "Post-Conciliar Social Awareness in the Indian Church", and the other, "Whither Ecumenism in India?", by Fr E. R. Hambye. Though each one spoke of a different aspect of the work of the Church, both developed their ideas along parallel lines, and came in a way to the same conclusion, that there is still a long way to go before both, Ecumenism and Social Awareness, become truly dynamic forces within the Indian Church.

Should we not ask the question: Is it possible to combine ecumenical action with social awareness? A study of the lines of thought in the two articles and of their conclusions seems to point to it, and since many of us are engaged in both activities, an effort to make a synthesis of the two might help to make our work more effective.

Fr Fernandes gives a very comprehensive analysis of the post-conciliar work of the Church in the field of social action in India; he gives a detailed description of the various statements issued by the CBCI, which shows that the Church has not always been silent in the face of the social unjust conditions of our country. We can also see that there has been a marked progress in the tone of the CBCI pronouncements, so that we find in them very relevant terms like unjust social structures, the need for considering justice and liberation as an integral part of evangelization, the need to fight caste discrimination and the exploitation of the oppressed, etc.

One cannot but agree with Fr Fernandes when he says that there is nevertheless a cleavage between the statements of the Church leaders and their actions. In fact we cannot say that there has been a planned effort to fight at a deep level against the prevailing social evils, because this, if it were to bring about a radical change, would naturally result in an open confrontation with the present social system. That the Church is not prepared for it at present is only natural, since it has become heavily institutionalized and dependent on the government's good will and resources. We must not be blind to the fact that the Church is very much part of the system, and it cannot think of being totally independent from it at present.

The Church, however, stands truly by the gospel values in the bold statements referred to above; and it is not alone in doing so, for other Christians too proclaim the same values. And here is where Ecumenism has a vital contribution to make. Fr Hambye, in his survey of the ecumenical movement in India, remarks: "Much of

ecumenism today in India is being linked with radical social changes." He speaks of ecumenism in its usual sense of union among various Christian denominations, which has certainly made remarkable progress in India. Can this progress be accelerated?

It certainly can, if it is given the right orientation. The dream of institutional and organic Christian unity seems to remain a utopia, however attractive it may be, because of the vast cultural, intellectual and traditional pluralism which cannot be ignored. A more realistic approach seems to be that of working for unity among Christians of different denominations on the basis of our common belief in Jesus Christ and in his teaching, which certainly has all the elements for radical social change. Are not all Christians working for the establishment of God's Kingdom? It cannot be a kingdom divided within itself, for such a kingdom will not stand; it must have as its foundation the values of the gospel, love and brotherhood, respect for human life and dignity, justice and the common sharing of the goods of the earth, etc. Social awareness is nothing else but the full acceptance of those values with their consequences, so as to make them the framework of social, political and economic life.

Should not this be the immediate goal of all ecumenical action in India? We have grown so very much attached to the idea of remaining within the narrow boundaries of our Church structures, that it becomes difficult and even painful to overcome them. If we take into account the fact that the Church is not for its own sake, but for the sake of the Kingdom of God, which means a new society inspired fully by the values of the gospel, it will not be difficult to join hands with all Christians, who have in mind one and the same common purpose of bringing about the Kingdom, even if it means to consider as secondary all denominational traits and characteristics.

It is unfortunate that even today Christian denominations and Catholic communities remain so preoccupied with their own identity — as is the case in the matter of rites and jurisdiction among Catholics — that Christian unity can only remain a dream never to be realized. A different attitude is absolutely essential, for common social awareness among Christians of all denominations is not likely to come from statements made by official church leaders, but rather from the grass-roots, from people living together side by side and facing common problems.

Moreover, since we have in our society such a variety of religions, cultures and races, Christians should not only be united among themselves, but should join hands with all men of good will, of every race and creed, so that all will work together to bring about a just society. While ecumenism, in the traditional sense of seeking unity among Christians, is fully justified in Christian countries, in a country like India it should take a wider dimension, so as to embrace people of different religious beliefs as well.

The Christian community cannot remain a closed community. If it did, it would defeat its own purpose, since it is meant to be the

leaven of the gospel and to become one with the people with which it lives. It must, therefore, be able to recognize the gospel values in other religions and to accept them, fully convinced that the same God of history is active in all makind.

Non-Christians too are struggling to build a better world, the Kingdom of God, and we have to join hands with them; but we cannot do so with sincerity unless we first disown our self-delusion that we alone possess the whole truth and can learn nothing from others. We need to be open to accept the values which are found in others, for we can learn as much from them as they can from us. What they should see in us is our full commitment to Jesus and his mission, becoming the main-spring of our action for social awareness.

It is a fact that action groups along these lines are coming up all over the country; they are the real hope of a new society. Should not the official Church encourage openly the formation of such action groups on a non-denominational basis? This may mean the sacrifice of some of our communal interests; but will not such a sacrifice be a share in the sacrifice of Christ on the cross? Did he not explicitly say that from the cross he would draw all men to himself?

D. CORTADELLAS, S.J.

Correspondence

"Whither the CBCI ?" — A Rejoinder

Dear Editor,

This is with reference to your article in VIDYAJYOTI, October 1983.

I

I am afraid, the article very considerably misses perspective. Could it be purely accidental that you find yourself in complete agreement with the Latin bishops and, correspondingly, in total disagreement from the Orientals? One wonders what could be your defence if someone called your article "inspired" Did you ever notice the anomaly that all through the decades-long frustrating debates in the CBCI the Orientals have been desparately pleading for the implementation of the Roman documents, whether conciliar or papal — documents which leave hardly any room for doubt as to their meaning and intent — while the Latin bishops have, also consistently, taken an adamantly obstructionist posture and, using their brute majority, voted down every proposal for implementation?

You say in your conclusion: "Mutual sensitivity to these (interritual) issues being taken for granted and necessary legal protection guaranteed, it seems highly desirable to maintain the unitary character of the episcopal conference, thus enabling the entire episcopate of the country to continue (sic) to take common decisions binding on the different individual churches and leading to concerted action" (p. 434). Is this naiveté real or pretended? Is it not known to you that, at least from the Orientals' point of view (you are surely addressing yourself also to them), what they have now come to take for granted in their Latin brethren is cynical insensitivity to their basic co-ecclesial rights and, not less, to their human sensibilities?[1]. As for "legal protection", could you imaginably be more vague and general? Indeed, what sort of legal protection can possibly safeguard within the framework of a unitary CBCI the Synodal structure, which is for the Orientals "the normal channel of the exercise of episcopal collegiality" (p. 419), while the Latin Conference, even in its stipulated statutory form, has a much lesser role?

II

I must dissent from you when you identify "the common good of the Church in India and of the individual Churches themselves" with the unitary CBCI (p. 434) and fear that its demise "will have far-reaching (adverse) consequences for the unity of the Church in India" (p. 433).

For one thing, there is hardly much for anyone to feel proud about in the functioning of the unitary CBCI during the post-conciliar decades.[2] On the contrary, if only because the rites issue has stubbornly persisted (or been kept alive)

1. Cf. *Christian Orient* III (1982), p. 96 for the reaction of the Orientals to the Tiruchirapalli meeting of the CBCI and its organisational elections.

2. Just consider how, indeed so unlike bishops elsewhere, the CBCI found itself paralysed and just incapable of saying a pastoral word of reassurance and guidance in the wake of the *Humanae Vitae* controversies, even when the All India Seminar implicitly made an anguished plea for such a word; how like lambs our bishops accepted Mrs Gandhi's Emergency; how the CBCI passed on back to the Karnataka bishops the entire burden of taking a stand on the famous and till today unresolved Fr P. J. Jacob case; how the CBCI has looked on helplessly while the language issue is burning up the Archdiocese of Bangalore.

the CBCI has not only made itself practically impotent but also consistently projected of itself the most pathetic image of a house hopelessly and scandalously divided against itself

Neither do I see how logically or legitimately you can speak of the eventuality of the national conference of bishops being "reduced" to "some sort of federation" (p 419) You must know that the opposite of "unitary" unity is not necessarily *dis*-unity, it could as well be (provided, those concerned want to make it so) an *organic and living unity in multiplicity* (or, as you might theologically say, a trinitarian unity) You cannot a priori rule out this alternative, which might, for all we know, even *redeem* the CBCI and liberate and *elevate* it into a *true* federation of three fraternal national episcopal conferences of equal status and rights. How come, you are not aware that there *is* something funny in the fact your view flatly contradicts that of Cardinal Parecattil, who not only speaks for all his Oriental brethren, but also was for long President of the CBCI and is a much-reviled champion and spokesman for inculturation and Indianisation? Is it not somewhat presumptuous to assume that the Cardinal has the unity and the true interests of the Church in India less at heart than you and I? You ought to have known that in this far corner of the country— well, for the northern bishops and experts, the *Church in Kerala is possibly interesting only for its "inter-rite conflicts"*— there has existed for decades a sort of federated KCBC, that the KCBC has, on its own level, been at least as effective as the unitary CBCI and that the KCBC has also been *regularly meeting with non-Catholic bishops and their conferences* to consult with each other and to take united stands on matters of common interest.

III

Now let me indicate some of the inevitable consequences of the reorganisation of the CBCI, as provided for by the new Latin CIC and demanded by the Oriental bishops First of all it will mean that there will be three national bishops' conferences with equal rights This will have implicitly and effectively met the longstanding demand of the Orientals for the extension of their jurisdiction across the country (Do you now understand why the Latin bishops must panic?— whether reasonably or irrationally, that is a different question) It will further mean that, as the Oriental CBCIs operate within their synodal structure and evolve a modus operandi for today, the Latin CBCI, which will now be a statutory body, will make an analogical evolution toward greater autonomy and synodal collegiality. Further, it will mean that the rites problem will never more *dis*-figure the agenda of the CBCIs, which will thus be enabled to apply themselves to other vital issues of individual and common concern. Each CBCI or its representatives will be invited to the meetings of the others on a consultative basis and enrich the discussions and help the deliberations of their brethren with the wisdom of their own experiences.

IV

As for the documents, I am afraid, like other experts, you too possibly miss the wood for the trees and find contradictions where possibly none exists. Non-expert as I am, I do not see how CD 38, 2 contradicts CD 38, 6 — *let it be said in passing* that it might well be a little too rash for experts to make the Council Fathers dunces enough not to have been able to detect such a contradiction in the same number of the same decree. What the experts seem to lack is a differentiated global outlook, they fail to understand that the two subsections in question refer to different, but therefore not incompatible or contradictory, situations. I understand that CD 38, 2 could have the then (as now) existing *structure of the CBCI in view*, while CD 38, 6 provided for a situation (then as now) prevailing in Kerala. Neither do I see any contradiction between CD 38, 2 and the new Latin CIC 450, 1. Evidently, the concept of the bishops' conferences has evolved during *the post-conciliar* years. The Council speaks of these conferences as they then existed — as more or less "voluntary" or non-statutory bodies; the CIC speaks of Latin bishops' conferences as they should now be re-constituted as statutory bodies. *Indeed, CIC 450*, 1 (with its counterpart in the expected Oriental CIC) would have rendered CD 38, 2 dated — no great disaster or contradiction!

V

To *return to my starting point, minus fervent wishes* (*regarding* "sensitivity" and "legal protection" of minority rights), you firmly advocate the continuance of the status quo of the CBCI, by which the Latin bishops can continue to "legally" deny the Orientals their basic rights and to insult and humiliate them in various ways.[3] If you, on the other hand, indeed have the true unity and vitality of the Church in India at heart, then, I should think, you have nothing else to do, to begin with, than to tell the Latin bishops just to cooperate in the implementation of the demands of the Council regarding the Oriental Churches and those of the CIC in regard to themselves, and then, within the framework of basis loyalty to the Church and justice to their brethren, address themselves *to other tasks and challenges* in the spirit of true Christian and ecclesial unity and solidarity.

Lumen Institute,
Cochin-682 017

KOTTAKAPALLY, S.J.

A Reply

Dear Father Kottukapally,

My reply to your letter will be as brief as possible. It is clear that I speak here as an individual writer, not as editor of VIDYAJYOTI.

Your first question is whether my article is "inspired" by the Latin bishops. It is not I wrote as an individual, responsible theologian genuinely seeking the greater good of the Church in India where the structure of the CBCI is concerned. This is true even though the paper was originally presented at a recent meeting of the Inter-ritual Committee in Bombay In my understanding, I was not called to that meeting to espouse and defend a position of the Latin bishops.

My article, as you would have noticed, was very limited in scope. Not only did it not enter into the whole range of problems raised by the inter-Church relationships, even where the structure of the CBCI is concerned, it merely tried to clarify the juridical position, leaving it to the bishops to decide among the alternatives *open to them Only at the end of the article did I express my personal opinion* that the preservation of a unitary conference seems more conducive to the greater good.

I am aware that in this regard I find myself in agreement with the Latin bishops' opinion and opposed to the official position of the Oriental bishops. It does not, *however, necessarily follow that I agree with the Latin bishops on all issues* concerned Nevertheless, when advocating the implementation of Vatican II decisions, distinctions need to be made for everything cannot be taken in one package deal. Some decisions are entrusted by the Council to the responsibility of local individual bishops, while others can only be taken by the Holy See (CD 23, 3). Clearly the eventual restructuring of the CBCI belongs to the latter group

You find my advocacy of "legal protection" of the rights and autonomy of the Oriental Churches, within a unitary conference, too vague Admittedly, I was only concerned with stating the principle. It will be the task of the Inter-ritual Committee to spell out in the revised statutes of the CBCI what this implies, and to do so to the satisfaction of the Oriental Churches. You go further, and imply that no "legal protection can possibly safeguard within the framework of a unitary CBCI the Synodal structure" *of the Oriental Churches. I am not convinced* by this a priori statement. First I ask: Do the Oriental Churches in Kerala actually function *with a Synodal structure? Second. the mode of operation of the CBCI and, in* particular, the binding force of decisions can be so defined as not to interfere with the legitimate autonomy of the minority Churches. To this end, as I pointed out,

3. Did you really miss the irony of your writing (p. 426) that, on the contentious article of the new Latin CIC, Archbishop Pimenta made a representation to the Pope "in his quality of President of the CBCI", while "Cardinal Parecattil, President of the Syro-Malabar Bishops Conference, shortly later also wrote to the Pope making a contrary representation"?

provision should be made in the Statutes to forestall any imposition by the majority rite through a 2/3 majority vote

We dissent on the respective merits and demerits of a unitary conference or federation of conferences. Your first reason for welcoming the demise of the present CBCI is its apparent inefficiency. *I do not intend to make an apology for* the conference Yet can its inability to speak out on the two important national issues which you mention in note be attributed to its unitary character? Would a federative structure have by itself remedied this inability? As for the two local situations you mention in the same note, is it the task of the CBCI to devise for them proper solutions? As I understand it, a national episcopal conference should concern itself with national issues. You foresee that a federative structure will result in an "organic and lively unity in multiplicity" and mention the KCBC as model of such happy functioning My own preoccupation is that, no matter how smoothly a federation may work, it remains by its very nature a consultative body, with no strictly deliberative power The strength of the episcopal conference would thereby be considerably weakened Experience shows the lack of efficiency — and credibility — which mars ecclesiastical assemblies of a purely consultative nature. The Synod of Bishops in Rome is a case in point. My option for preserving a unitary CBCI is not for imposing uniformity but for allowing the conference to deliberate and take decisions on matters of national interest common to all three Churches

From the replacement of the unitary structure by a federative one you anticipate as first happy consequence the creation of three national bishops' conferences This seems to me illogical, things would rather have to happen the other way round. Only the creation of three national conferences — which in turn presupposes the extension of the Oriental jurisdictions to the whole country — can open the way for such a federation It may be good to reflect on the situation that would be created meanwhile by any hasty onesided action Were the Oriental Churches to withdraw from the CBCI the conference would in fact be reduced to a national conference of Latin bishops The Oriental bishops could (they would not need to) be invited to the meetings, but with only consultative vote (CIC 450, 1) Meanwhile no obligation would be laid on the Latin conference to enter into a federation with other conferences, at least so long as these have no national character. A federation is by nature freely consented A parallel may be drawn with FABC, membership of which has been freely decided upon by the CBCI. As for the "greater autonomy and synodal collegiality" which the Latin conference would acquire as second consequence of a federative structure, it points, to my sense, to a common problem which the three individual Churches can best solve together. It is the *local* Church in India, made up of the three individual Churches, which must be given its legitimate autonomy in relation to the central authority.

Regarding the interpretation of the documents, I am afraid you have misread my article You seem to attribute to me the rashness of detecting a contradiction between CD 38, 2 and 38, 6 My effort has precisely been to show that there is no such contradition, provided the texts are properly interpreted — which is not always done. I agree with you that the two paragraphs refer to two different situations. But I further specify the difference. CD 38, 2 refers to a national *conference* with deliberative vote, of which all bishops of whatever rite are members, CD 38, 6 advocates *meetings* between bishops of different rites where — like in Kerala — jurisdictions actually overlap.

I cannot agree with your way of dispelling the contradiction — or at least serious discrepancy — between CD 38, 2 and CIC 450, 1. CD is not talking about pre-Vatican II voluntary or non-statutory conferences; it paves the way for their present statutory character (CD 37) The discrepancy between the two texts mentioned stands in so far as the only provision made in one becomes in the other the exception.

At the end of my article I wrote that, where the restructuring of the CBCI is concerned, the bishops of the three individual Churches are faced with a question of priorities. If, as I see it, the value of the local Church in India prevails the unitary structure of the CBCI will be preserved; if, on the contrary, the value attached to individual Churches has the upper hand, it will not. What the priority should be is, perhaps, where we finally disagree.

And this is where the question of perspective — which you found considerably missing in my article — comes in. In my view pastoral care of immigrant Orientals in Latin dioceses by priests of their own rite and eventually in parishes erected for them, should be part of a short-term policy to be promptly implemented, the erection of more Oriental exarchates and eparchies in present Latin-territories would also be part of the same. But the long-term policy and perspective must lie elsewhere, *in the emergence in India of one, true, local-individual Church*. In such a Church genuine individual traditions will be preserved but also transformed through a process of inculturation and adaptation to the Indian context. Its emergence requires, no doubt, the concerted efforts of the three existing individual Churches But am I wrong to think that the Church's evangelising mission suggests this perspective — in which, incidentally, problems of jurisdiction and of one or more national episcopal conference, will have disappeared.

Yours sincerely,

J. Dupuis, S.J.

Marriage of Polygamist Converts

According to the text of Can 1148, 1, "When an unbaptized man who *simultaneously* has a number of unbaptized wives, has received baptism in the Catholic Church, if it would be a harship for him to remain with the first of the wives, he may retain one of them, having dismissed the others." In my translation and comment in Vidyajyoti, October 1983, p. 463 and my book *New Marriage Law* (Bombay, St Paul Publications), pp. 130-131, I had not adverted to this qualification 'simultaneously' So unless the Holy See modifies the law or includes the matter in the Decennial Faculties for mission Ordinaries, the favour does not extend to 'successive' polygamy.

Still, many cases of successive polygamy could be resolved by applying the Pauline Privilege (cf. Can 1143), with dispensation from 'interpellation' (Can. 1144, 2) if it would be useless because, for instance, the first partner has entered into a new stable union.

I may take this opportunity to note that the impediment of consanguinity in the New Law would extend also to the relationship of a man with his grand-niece, although the case would be rare. This would also be a case of relationship in the fourth degree in the collateral line according to the new mode of computation which already existed in the Oriental Law (cf. Can. 108, 3).

George Lobo, S.J.

Book Reviews

Liberation in the Bible

Exodus. A Hermeneutics of Freedom. By J Severino CROATTO *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1981 Pp vi-89 $ 4.95

The author's intent is to offer a contribution to the theology of liberation. The method is markedly Ricoeurian. The main points of the hermeneutical method and vocabulary are concisely and clearly exposed for the non-initiated reader, at the beginning of ch 1, 'In Quest of Meaning' (pp 1-3). The translation is made upon the second edition of the original work in Spanish The publication of a second edition is justified from the consideration that "the very nature of hermeneutic discourse rules out its being fixed in final form once and for all. It must undergo re-readings in the light of processes that bring the meaning out of hiding" (p. iv)

The theme of the book is Exodus because of its importance, the event being the core of the biblical message. The author's main stress is on how the kerygma of liberation is treated as a theme in the Bible. The theology of Exodus is not merely a triumphal thanksgiving, rather an acknowledgment of faith in the liberating God who can still liberate Exodus is a message to people who are oppressed or who are afraid of being oppressed. Looking to Exodus as a basis for a theology of liberation supposes a contextualized reading, or re-reading of Exodus, discovering in the text "an excess of meaning", viz, a meaning which was not on the biblical author's horizon of understanding, but is suggested by the reader's situation. "This is what is called 'eisegesis' which enters into the text without being impertinent subjectivity" (p. vi). Authentic re-reading links kerygma and situation.

The hermeneutical perspective does not make an 'application' of the message of Exodus to a concrete case Such application would be anti-hermeneutical and tantamount to accommodating the biblical message to concrete cases. "*My* hermeneutical moment is different from that of one or another reader. In order to write these pages from a hermeneutical and Latin American perspective, I do not first carry out an exegesis of the biblical passage and *subsequently* relate it to the facts of our world or our oppressed continent. Rather, the facts must be, and are *prior* to my interpretation of the biblical Word. Only thus is my interpretation eisegetical" (p. 11).

Three events of the OT are examined: the Exodus, event and word (ch. 2); Genesis 1-2: human beings created for freedom (ch. 3), the prophets: 'conscientizers' of alienated humanity (ch. 4). These considerations are followed by two NT events. the Christ· 'Liberator' of the oppressed as seen in the Gospels (ch. 5); and Paul: radical human 'liberation' especially as seen in the letter to the Romans (ch 6). "Our intention is to interrelate these kerygmatic 'foci', to see their continuity, their mutual interpretation, the successive 'unfolding-of-meaning', the formation of consciousness-of-freedom and a commitment to liberation as characteristic notes of Christian faith and praxis" (p. 10). Each of these topics is analyzed in detail as event and situation, as text and hermeneutical account with its various aspects and message.

The prophets are seen as interpreters of the times, 'critics' of Israel, and 'conscientizers' of the people They were not political leaders or revolutionaries; "the prophets *per se* are not commanders or leaders. Their strength is in the denouncing, conscientizing, orientating word ...Moreover the prophets move on the religious plane: they recall the commitment of the Covenant — a concrete social commitment — but they wait for the action *of God* when the oppressor or the sinner does not change" (p 46).

Jesus was not a revolutionary, e.g., after the manner of the Zealots, or in any other way. By a revolutionary attitude Jesus would have exhausted his action within the Jewish horizon, whereas his program was one of universal liberation, redounding also in the political sphere. This he has brought about through his death-resurrection and his teaching of universal love (pp. 63ff).

In Romans Christ appears as our liberator from death, from the Law and

from sin, three factors of alienation which are eliminated by the death-resurrection of Christ. Paul's theology of liberation must be interpreted "from the prespective of the concrete 'situations' that people live, and not from that of some unreal asceticism" (p. 78), nor from a mere individual (or individualistic) viewpoint but from a perspective considering the Church-as-*people*. This refers to 'people' in a political or ethnic sense as well, because Paul lays the foundation for all liberation by emphasizing the role of *love* of the neighbour — in line with Christ's liberating actions, carried to the 'limit' in his self-sacrifice unto death (p. 79). Though present-day situations may in no way have any parallel in biblical times, the message of the text may imply them as 'pre-figured' in any of the liberation episodes considered. "The salvation-event in the Exodus, the *kerygma of the human vocation to freedom* (Genesis), the prophetic denunciation of injustice, the judgment of Jesus of Nazareth against the oppressive structures of the Law, his most profound liberation in the paschal mystery all these delineate the core of the kerygma that is intelligible to us, in Latin America, only from the perspective of their hermeneutical implications as 'historical project' of liberation" (p 82)

The book offers an earnest effort to present and substantiate a solid biblical foundation for a theology of liberation This is the work of a known biblical scholar who proceeds carefully, step by step, helping the reader to discover hidden elements in the 'reservoir-of-meaning' of a foundational event The method is not without dangers, especially of subjectivity One wonders whether at times situational eisegetical re-reading has not forced the 'perspective' character of the text, as can be seen, v.g , in the case of Paul, mentioned above The fact that NT authors derived their interpretation of the Jesus event from the OT, and vice versa the meaning of the OT from Christ as the fulfilment of OT prophecy or expectation is not necessarily a norm for our own interpretation However, the moot points of the method cannot be considered here. A trifle the preface stresses that the title of the book 'Exodus' should not suggest a quest for a hermeneutic of a theology of freedom, but of liberation, a theology of the process of liberation, not of achieved liberty (p. v), but then, the sub-title of the book 'A Hermeneutic of Freedom' could be misleading.

The reader will find in the author's article, "Biblical Hermeneutics in the Theology of the Oppressed", published in VIDYAJYOTI 46 (1982) pp 54-69 a more detailed exposition of the hermeneutics as a *method*, stressing how every reading of the Bible is necessarily a re-reading, and how the Bible ought to be read as a whole. In the last section of the article the reader will easily detect one danger, viz., how the attempt at completing one text by another (the Bible as a whole) might neglect the immediate context of a passage This can be seen in the example given from 1 Cor 14, 33b-35 (the veil of the women in the church at Corinth), and Gal 3, 28 ("there is no more male and female. .all are one in Christ Jesus") One will note that the levels here are different · socio-cultural and eschatological A reference to Gen 1, 26 can be justified, taking into account the change in the enumeration (Greek text) "no more Jew *or* Greek, no more slave *or* freeman, no more male *and* female" This last element in the enumeration reads like a quotation However, the argument built upon this 'reading of the Bible as a whole' is rather subtle In the article the author speaks of the "surplus-of meaning" in a text. This expression looks preferable to the one used in the book "excess-of-meaning"

J VOLCKAERT, S J.

Bible of the Oppressed. By Elsa TAMEZ *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp viii-88 $ 5 95

The book consists of two parts: Oppression in the OT (chs 1-4), and The Good News of Liberation (chs 5-7). The first part is a study of the experience of oppression as recorded in the OT, its causes, authors and victims, methods and forms, both on the international and national levels Nine Hebrew words are analysed in their contexts, revealing various aspects of oppression The oppressors are the rich who strive to increase their wealth The poor hope in God The second part, the Good News of Liberation, is reduced to a brief sketch The Gospel proclaims life, love and freedom but "Clearly something has gone awry in the reading of God's word. ***Struggle, life*** and ***liberation*** have been replaced by ***passivity, resignation***, and ***submission***. In other words, the gospel has been reduced to a set of individualistic terms relating to the 'spiritual' order" (pp. 57-58). The

Gospel must be read "in a context of oppression, such as exists in Latin America, and *with a view to freeing* men and women from this oppression" (p 58) The liberator in the OT is Yahweh acting through the oppressed, their struggle turns into a profession of faith. In the NT the Good News is the reign of God, which is at hand The Good News is not just liberation from sin this would be only "a simple behavioural change", a kind of moral teaching which could be found outside Christianity as well A warning is added that "for many centuries now the biblical passages on the poor have been spiritualized and distorted Poverty is regarded as a virtue, as an abstract quality that can be attributed to rich and poor alike . ." (p 69) Latin America has the reputation of being a Christian country This statement is a contradiction because the masses live in abject poverty, oppressed and repressed A genuine conversion is needed, "a conversion to our neighbour" (p 81)

Somehow the title of the book is a misnomer, since practically the study is restricted to the OT The reference to the NT hardly indicates any idea characteristic of the NT, in the matter The writer is aware that her approach to the biblical texts, taking the OT as a whole independently from the differences of authors, circumstances, linguistic developments, etc, entails a risk, but she deems it worth taking She also expresses the hope that the study of the OT will provide guidelines for a later NT study

This work on oppression is not an abstract academic speculation, rather it refers to historical experiences In some cases, unfortunately, one has the impression that the reading of the biblical texts is somewhat one-sided The poor are understood exclusively in the socio-economic sense, overlooking the meaning of humble submission to God, which is common also in the Bible For the OT nine basic words for oppression have been analysed, for the NT the authress has chosen five Hebrew (rather than Greek) nouns (p 70). Among these we note *'uni* (not *'ani* as printed) This occurs parallel with *'anaw* in the meaning of humble, gentle, dependent (on God), in this meaning Mt 21, 5 quotes Zach 9, 9 on the occasion of Jesus' solemn approach to Jerusalem. The writer leaves out the aspect of sin in injustice, oppression and violence. This is regrettable as sin is the ultimate cause of all social evil, and the primary object of Christ's mission was to conquer sin (Lk 1, 77, Mt 1, 21, 26, 28; Jn 1, 29)

The authress regrets the 'spiritualizing' distortion of the Gospel, especially regarding poverty, which has taken place for several centuries Her statement may be a slight exaggeration; however, we might also consider that Jesus' attitude towards poverty could appear somewhat puzzling when we hear him recommend voluntary poverty to the rich ruler (whom Jesus loved, Mark remarks), or when he praises those who abandon everything for the sake of the Kingdom as did the apostles, or when he puts renunciation to all one has, as the necessary cost of discipleship (Lk 14, 33). Assertions, therefore, like "poverty is something decidedly negative" (p 72) need some qualification

One does not feel too happy with a certain tendency at generalizing individual instances of oppression as found in the OT This, however, may be due to the writer's desire not to extend the size of the book by accumulating examples. I regret particularly that in the chapter on conversion (p 77) the text of Hos 6, 1-2 has been twisted to serve the purpose In the chapter conversion is spoken of with reference to the oppressors "a return to the Lord by doing good works"; whereas in Hos 6, 1-2 the Lord speaks of conversion on the part of the oppressed, their sufferings, the prophet says, were a punishment for their infidelity The authress leaves out half a verse thereby totally changing the meaning of the original In general the authress seems not to avoid completely the risk of swinging the pendulum to the opposite extreme by reacting against past attitudes

The book is written in a simple style, with lucidity, and can be easily understood and appreciated by the general reader, a feature not so common on the part of scholars. There are many excellent remarks in the work The writer's zeal and desire to stimulate the reader to contribute to the elimination of oppression and all social evil is not only praiseworthy but inspires respect and esteem

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

The Way to Peace. Liberation through the Bible. By L. John TOPEL, S.J. *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan*, 1980 Pp. viii-199. £ 4.95.

The work is meant to be a textbook for a part of a course on Liberation

Theology, viz., the biblical foundations of the Judeo-Christian response to oppression· God and humankind cooperating in bringing about a reign of justice and peace in our world

The study begins with the book of Exodus (ch. 1), the liberation from Egypt being the basic and central event in Israel's history. God has manifested himself in liberating his people from slavery, giving them a safe passage and a land of their own, looking after their needs, food, drink, etc. After the conquest of Canaan God continues caring for his people through the instrumentality of a human authority that can administer justice under developed socio-economic conditions: the Judges, Saul, David and the monarchy (ch 2) In this economy the Law obtains a vital place as the foundation of a just society (ch. 3). In this set-up "Yahweh worship is ethical action for the neighbour, not magical practices, and this is what grounds society" (p 23). Later on reflecting on its past, God's manifestation and the meaning of his interventions, the progress or decline of the nation's mistakes and failures, Israel elaborates a theology of 'Human Origins of Liberation' (ch. 4): the origin of man, fall, sin, etc (traditions of Genesis). The Prophetic movement was the God-given social conscience of Israel (more praticularly in Amos, Isaiah and Jeremiah) The prophets attacked exploitation of the poor because ever since creation God wanted interhuman justice In post-exilic prophecy, Wisdom literature and apocalyptic literature (Psalms, Deutero-Isaiah, Wisdom and Daniel) gradually the need appears of a deeper understanding of God's Law and the Promise.

As far as possible the author has followed a broad chronological development in the study of the OT. This method proved impracticable for the NT. All writings of Paul precede the Gospels but contain theological perspectives earlier than Paul, belonging to the Gospel tradition. The Babylonian Exile had brought about the hope for a new Kingdom of God, characterized by justice and peace, with a new Messianic king and a new Covenant. The NT community believed that this hope was fulfilled in the Church, that the Messiah was not a powerful monarch but the Son of Man, the Servant of God, who established God's Kingdom by dying for mankind, and saving us from evil of all kinds, physical, moral and social. Men are saved 'in him', through a physical union with his risen body as he is the physical organ of the whole material world, "the goal and destiny not just of all men and women, but of the whole material cosmos" (p 105)

In this union with Christ Christians gain their freedom from sin, death and the Law. This liberation in Christ requires a response on the part of the Christian "The Christian Response (ability)" (chs 9-10) is exposed especially in the Sermon on the Mount which "is *not law* calling for observation, but *gospel* asking for the peak of human authenticity, while at the same time proclaiming that such actions *are available* in Jesus' loving relationship to the Father, shared with the disciples" (p. 125). Two other essential qualities of the Sermon are its interiorization and its conversion to the neighbour. This plan to bring justice to the world through maximal conversion to the neighbour is not 'utopia' but 'eutopia' (ch. 10, less scriptural, more speculative). The author remarks that "in many ways, the soul of this conversion to the world will take place at the level of individual conversion and especially at the level of the small community" (p 145).

The Epilogue summarizes the results of this survey of chs 1-9 and shows how it correlates with some of the findings of a developed theology of liberation. This scriptural sketch falls short of the specificity of the current liberation theologies but much of what is in the Bible appears to be at the root of the perspectives propounded by it

This textbook is concise and clear. Though it is meant specifically as an introduction to a theology of liberation it could also be used as a survey of some of the main themes of both OT and NT. At times the exposition may perhaps look rather sketchy, one does not expect a fully developed treatment of the topic in a 'textbook'. Both the core of the book (pp 1-155) and the footnotes (pp. 157-193) testify to the author's familiarity not only with Scripture and biblical literature but with other disciplines as well, his competence, however, is mainly in the biblical sphere In a few instances I would have expected a stricter interpretation of the biblical text, as, v.g., for Jn 17 where the oneness Jesus prays for looks to me to be vertical (disciples-Christ-Father in the work of the apostolate) rather than horizontal (among the disciples), just as in Jn 15 the oneness of the vine and the branches strictly refers to the vitality of the apostolate. In neither case has the context any overtone of 'liberation'. However, these

are minor points Some generalization is perhaps unavoidable in a work like this, as well as overstressing sometimes the aspect of 'liberation'. In the footnote regarding the Septuagint (p 10) read 'translation' instead of 'transliteration'.

J VOLCKAERT, S J.

Marxist-Christian Dialogue

A Matter of Hope. By NICHOLAS LASH *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1981. Pp xiv-312 £ 14 95

Of late books on Marxist-Christian dialogue have been appearing as a result of the openness of the Council, especially in its Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, which expresses sentitivity to the humanistic ideologies and movements of our times and the Christian duty of interpreting 'the signs of the times' Nicholas Lash, a Catholic theologian at Cambridge University, takes up the task of interpreting the thought of Marx with a view to a dialogical appreciation

The attitude of Lash is far distant from that of the earlier defensive apologetic of Catholic theology against Marxism This book, he says, is the result of a theologian "taking Marxism seriously" He also notes that little direct and reasonably close study of Marx has been done by theologians Even liberation theologians and the proponents of political theologies do not seem to engage into a detailed discussion with Marx's thought in his own texts Contrariwise, Lash's primary intention is to study the thought of Karl Marx, not Marxism in all its complex historical developments Though not an expert on Marx or on Marxism, he considers himself a Christian theologian "who has sat down in front of a number of Marx's texts, and has tried to understand them, to learn from them and critically to confront them from the resources of (his) own experience and understanding" (p 8)

In the course of nineteen chapters Lash runs through the whole gamut of themes and concepts central to Marx's thought which are no less significant for Christian theology. Studies on Marx usually make a distinction between the 'early' Marx and the 'mature' Marx Some see a continuity and others a discontinuity between the two Whatever view one may adopt on this matter, one must admit that discussions of explicitly theological and religious topics already occur in Marx's pre-1845 writings. Moreover, Marx's thought as a whole is of interest to theologians.

In his discussion of *The German Ideology*, Lash points out Marx's basic concern to liberate people from the tyranny of concepts. "Philosophers have only *interpreted* the world, in various ways; the point is to change it" (eleventh thesis on Feuerbach). Marx accuses the philosophers of having failed to realise that ideas are only the shadow of reality. Idealism with its primacy of the rational must give way to the materialist (or historical) method that comes to grips with the process of human action in the material world.

There follow chapters on individual aspects of Marx's thought which have relevance to Christian theology One of these deals with correctness and truth. For Marx, human transformative activity is "constitutive of man's relationship to truth" This has great significance for Christian theology Our theological statements, e g , that the Church is sign and sacrament of unity with God and men, must be scrutinised as to the verification of their truth in the life of Christians Propositionally, abstractly and speculatively such statements are correct. *But their truth character is known in the* commitment of Christians as a community struggling to become what they profess Lash's perceptive comments on truth-conditions of doctrinal statements are illuminating Similarly his analysis of the capitalist mode of production according to Marx shows that materialism is at the core of the system. It makes us relate to the material world in a destructive dehumanizing way and transforms all relations into money relations. This is in contradiction with the spirituality of the gospels (cf Lk 12 13-21).

In like fashion Lash establishes a critical dialogue with other basic themes of Marx, such as interpretation of history, alienation, ideology, base and superstructure, etc Such a dialogue points to mutual correction and complementary enrichment between Marxism and Christianity. Lash believes in the possibility of separating, without violence to Marx's thought, his economic theory and political strategy from his philosophy, and of endorsing the former while rejecting the latter The materialism of Marx with its insistance on the primacy of the practical and transformative praxis in history is not incompatible with Christianity. "Christianity is more adequately defined as a tradition of action and interpretation than as a system of ideas or beliefs" (p. 285). The author does not

consider himself a 'Christian Marxist' nor rank himself among Christians for Socialism, but as said earlier, professes to be a Christian theologian who has taken Marx seriously The book is a testimony to this. Any Christian who takes his faith seriously must reckon with the thought of Marx. Lash's insightful comments and reflections contribute towards a Christian-Marxist dialogue, and no less to Christian theology.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Christianity and Marxism. Edited by Alan SCARFE and Patrick SOOKHDEO. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press,* 1982. Pp. 168. £ 4.20.

The book under review presents seven essays of a symposium on Christianity and Marxism. The essays are by Christians who have understood the challenge of Marxism or have come to know communism at close quarters. They examine Marxism and communism in its different forms from the vantage point of their commitment to Jesus and his gospel.

The basic truth of Marxism that theory and praxis form a unity means judgment on the dichotomy between faith and practice often noticed in Christianity. The authors avoid a purely defensive apologetic. They know that the issues facing Christians in their relationships with Marxism are complex. There is much that Christians can learn from Marxism: concern for society and its transformation; rooting out of oppression; the creation of just structures and a new order of society based on justice and equality; sense of mission and the criticism of dominating and exploitative power. Faith in the new creation brought about by Christ must be the foundation for a human project of liberation and turn Christians into a leaven of social transformation.

In his treatment of Marxism as twentieth century religion George Paterson points out its concerns for man which should always have been the concerns of Christianity. Marx attacks the misuse of mammon. Paterson critically examines Marxist rituals, mythologies and ethics. Kathleen Carter writes on Christianity in the Soviet Union, with facts and figures. The lived experience of Christians there testifies against the great socialist ideals of communism. This testimony adds a realistic note to the symposium. Paterson's second article on the spiritual Marxism of Mao-Tse-Tung is interesting and enlightening. The 'inculturated' Marxism of Mao may be considered revisionist by fundamentalist Marxists. Mao laid emphasis on the spiritual power of people for the transformation of society "Of all things in the world", he declared, "people are the most precious" (p. 75). Korean theologians have derived inspiration from this thought of Mao for their 'Minjung' (People's) theology.

Turning to the Latin American scene, Chris Sugden writes sympathetically on the challenges of Marxism to Christians. He recognizes the contribution of Marxist analysis to the understanding of the evils of capitalist society He appreciates the basic stand of Christians for Socialism as being in consonance with the Christian view of things David Lyon contributes a positive evaluation of Marxism: Marxism is a reminder to Christians of the liberative potential of the gospel As he remarks, there has been no evangelical critique of capitalism until the seventies The Marxist notion of praxis adds to the understanding of Christian commitment. Yet he also points to those aspects of Marxist theory which are irreconcilable with Christianity. In the final chapter Tony Pearce explores the alternative to Marxism in terms of a Christian perspective. Socialism 'with a human face' is not sufficient. What is needed is 'socialism with a divine face'.

The book is an evangelical contribution to the understanding of Marxism, critical enough of the theoretical assumptions of Marxism and open and sympathetic enough to a dialogue with Marxism

S AROKIASAMY, S.J

The Hope We Share. By. J. KOTTUKAPALLY *Barrackpore, Dialogue Series Publications,* 1983 Pp. xi-160. Rs 25.

This third book comes from an Indian author who also takes cognisance of the Indian situation. The title, like Lash's, reveals a positive approach. The book reads the signs of openness of Marxists and Christians to dialogue and shows the hopes they share for a new humanity. The dialogical posture of Marxists and Christians is an imperative of history, supported by the Constitution *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II and the conference of the communist and workers' parties, Berlin, 1976. Since then many developments have taken place in the direction of Christian-Marxist relations in different parts of the world, including India. However, in official circles of the Church, Marxist-Christian relations are looked upon with great reserve.

In the chapter entitled 'Tortuous Road to Dialogue', the author exposes the traditional view that it is impossible to separate Marxist theory from the Marxist analysis of society used by Christians in Latin America and Christians for Socialism in different countries His own approach to Marxism consists in deepening the understanding and widening the vision to enter into a serious dialogue on the doctrinal level

Marxism has different forms which the author broadly divides into Marxism-Leninism and non-Leninist Marxism. Unlike Lash, who focuses his study on the thought of Karl Marx, Fr Kottukapally critically examines the whole of Marxism, within the limited space of the book, with a view to a deeper understanding of Marxism vis-a-vis Christianity He would not claim his study to be a thorough-going discussion of the whole gamut of themes and problems of Marxist thought

According to the author the emerging basic convergence which justifies Marxist-Christian dialogue is the cause of man In Marxism solidarity with the poor and the exploited is expressed specifically in relation to the industrial proletariat, its ultimate point of reference is man In Christianity too, the theocentric faith has its single focus of concern in man The basic humanism of Marx (and Marxism) springs from a heart that has known the human sufferings of workers in the industrial age The pages of the gospels reveal on the part of Jesus a similar basic concern for the poor and the exploited In the author's treatment of Jesus' concern for man sometimes clarity suffers for want of sufficient discussion. The author says that both Marxism and Christianity reject idealism, providing just a brief footnote to show in what sense Christianity too rejects idealism (p. 33)

Examining the dialectics of history in Marxist perspective the author points out the salient features of the dialectical method as opposed to the metaphysical thinking which has been characteristic of Christian philosophy Christian philosophy, and theology in particular, would gain much from the dialectical method. At the same time, the author points out the weaknesses of the method in its operation in history. One glaring contradiction in the historical praxis of Marxism is that the dictatorship of the proletariat passes into the dictatorship of the party, with the highest degree of centralisation, contradicting the demand for decentralised participation implicit in the dictatorship of the proletariat. Marxism-Leninism which criticises utopian socialism seems to lack critical sense with regard to the dictatorship of the proletariat. Mao who 'inculturated' Marxism-Leninism was aware of the need for renewal and a creative interpretation suited to the cultural situation of China The author's criticism of Mao is too brief and cursory He gives a number of facts which need to be more critically sorted out. Not all non-Marxist students of Marxism will agree with his way of understanding the Polish Solidarity movement. Yet his critical observations on the historical reality of communism are valid from the point of view of historical praxis, it is only a pious hope that the dictatorship of the proletariat (indeed of the party) will pass into the higher phase of communism with the withering away of the state.

The author rightly speaks of Marxism as a "philosophy of action and change, of revolutionary action.. " (p. 122), though Marx at least would not call his thought philosophy. In an honest evaluation of Marxism, the author brings out its great strengths and points out its weaknesses Christians can critically work together with Marxists for the common goal of a new humanity. This book is perhaps the first to appear in India on Christian-Marxist dialogue. It is a bold venture of great value Anyone who takes Marxism and Christian-Marxist dialogue seriously will find it interesting and provocative

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Christian Mission

Christianity Rediscovered. An Epistle from the Masai By Vincent J DONOVAN *London, SCM Press,* 1982. Pp. viii-200. £ 5.50.

This is a fascinating book which all missionaries and theologians interested in evangelization should read. We are told that, first published in 1978, it "is already a classic of modern missionary writing" The approach is quite radical and even revolutionary, yet much of it only spells out to the last practical consequences what good missiology says The author himself summarises his thought thus: "To approach each culture with the respect due to it as the very place wherein resides the possibility of salvation and holiness and grace. To approach the people of any culture or nation, not as individuals, but as com-

munity. To plan to stay not one day longer than is necessary in any one place. To give the people nothing, literally nothing, but the unchanging, supra-cultural, uninterpreted gospel before baptism. To help them expand that gospel into a creed and a way of life after baptism. To enable them to pray as Christians To leave them the Bible towards the day when they can read it and use it as a living letter in their lives. To insist that they themselves be their own future missionaries. To link them with the outside church in unity, and the outside world in charity and justice To agree with them that baptism is indeed everything, that the reception of baptism is the acceptance of the total responsibility and the full, active sacramental power of the Church, the eucharistic community with a mission To encourage them to trust in the Spirit given at baptism, and to use the powers and gifts and charisms given to the community by the Spirit. And then the final step. The final missionary step as regards the people of any nation or culture, and the most important lesson we will ever teach them — is to leave them" (pp 162-163). For Donovan therefore the missionary's task is to offer the Gospel in its purity The recipients' task is to interpret it an find out the cultic, sacramental, social, moral, cultural and political implications of the Good News for them He accepts an inculturated Eucharist (besides baptism), but is doubtful about the fixation into seven sacraments

I think that for all its challenging, though somewhat simplistic outlook, the book is strongly influenced by the African tribal situation· the missionary is an outside agent with a short-lived role (much is made of the example of Paul's rapid journeys, as if his was the only possible model) This leads to the question of "de-mission" which has been a strong factor in the African Church But one could also think of other cultural situations in which the missionary becomes part of, and auxiliary in, the Church where he has been sent — rather than remaining essentially linked to the sending church — a witness within his new community to the supra-ethnical character of the fellowship of faith

There seems to be a certain inconsistency in the book. On the one hand it decries, rightly, the rigid historical and Western conception of the role of the priest in the community and encourages new forms of ministry in the social and spiritual conditions of the new Churches, *with less distant, less dominating priests, eventually non-celibate. On the other hand the book works on the presupposition of a very restricted and narrowly* defined role of the missionary, as distinct from and outside the Church to which he is sent Sociological conditions in the Masai highlands may warrant this conception But is the case the same everywhere ? Equally the rigid dichotomy between the gospel and its interpretation, between the message and its social implications, seems to derive from theological theory more than from pastoral practice These reservations notwithstanding, what the author says about letting the new communities live their new faith according to their own perceptions is surely right His passionate plea challenges our theology and much of our ecclesiastical practices It makes us dream wistful dreams, without which the renewal of the Church is hardly possible. A book, therefore, worth discussing in missionary meetings.

G Gispert-Sauch, S J.

Preaching

The Finger of God. By Allan Boesak. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982. Pp xii-100. $ 5 95.

This is a book of sermons by a black minister to his congregation in South Africa. They are sermons with a difference. They are incarnate in the terrible reality of that country and show courage, anger, judgment and obedience to the word of God. They are not political speeches. they explain the biblical passages carefully, with exegetical competence and recourse to the original languages. But then come concrete and clear applications to the listeners in their actual situations, with their fears and the challenges they face Both the introductory essay on "Relevant Preaching in the Black Context" and the 12 sermons contained in the book could help many of us to renew our empoverished Sunday preaching.

G. Gispert-Sauch, S.J.

Marriage Law

The New Marriage Law. By George V. Lobo. *Bombay, St Paul Publications*, 1983. Pp. 150. Rs 12.

The need for a good and handy commentary on the New Marriage Law is

evident, as all pastors would be eager to know what are the changes to which they must pay attention, and how these changes are to be interpreted Fr Lobo's work is intended not only to present a new commentary with the text, but also to place marriage legislation within the theological and pastoral background He has succeeded to a great extent to meet this objective He has managed to place, within a very short time, and at a very modest price, a concise book in the hands of busy pastors and eager students The theological and pastoral basis of the canons has been succinctly explained. The hurry, however, has affected the presentation. The method he has chosen, namely to give a running commentary on each canon, has its drawbacks, though he has tried to remedy them with cross references. An appendix, giving the summary of the most important changes that have been introduced by the new Code, would have been helpful. So, too, an index.

G. KUREETHRA

Permanent Diacone

The restoration of the permanent diaconate is a classic example of the fact that the Holy Spirit works in mysterious ways. While most of the bishops at Vatican II had envisioned the revival of the permanent diaconate as an aid in African and Asian mission lands as well as in Latin America, the latest statistics (1982) from the International Centre for the Diaconate prove otherwise Of the total of 8,273 ordained deacons, Africa had 1 6 percent A similar percentage existed for Asia, Australia and Oceania Central and South America have 11.5 percent, Europe had 19.2 percent. (Incidentally, Italy has 200, with one in Rome.) North America had 65.8 percent with Canada accounting for 3 percent and the United States a whopping 62.8 percent of the world total

(Paul E Ward, in *America*, July 18, 1983, p. 475)

Gum permissu superiorum

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII FEBRUARY 1984 No. 2

In This Issue

If, as is more clearly perceived today, the promotion of justice is a constitutive dimension of the Church's evangelizing mission, education for justice becomes an essential element of her educational work. In this context the question has repeatedly been asked in recent years what changes Christian educational institutions must undergo that they may fulfil their mission. Can a reorientation be given to them that will meet the present demands, or have more drastic measures become necessary, including perhaps disengagement from the present educational system? The debate goes on and is often loaded with emotions. Fr Alfred DE SOUZA, Director of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, asks "What Catholic Colleges Can Do for the New Society in India". In his view Catholic Colleges have an important function to play which he places against the background of the social and economic situation of the country. He spells out this social function, stressing in particular its "political" dimension. He also indicates what reforms are needed in order that Colleges may respond to the situation.

To instil the value of social justice into the minds of privileged students is one thing; to devise a meaningful educational system for the victims of injustice is another. After having been High School Principal for many years, Fr Joseph Murray ABRAHAM has launched out into an "educational pilgrimage with the poor". He shares his experience with our readers. Work-education, he says, is the key to the social problem. Education comes naturally to the poor, once it is combined with work that gives self-confidence and dignity. Work-education is, moreover, life-education, for work is the best pedagogue to community living. Work, education, family life — all three need to be grafter together into one living organism A communify has thus come into being in which a variegated mixture of people has been blended together into a large family. The experiment may well serve as a model for "basic communities" in the Indian context. It deserves our attention.

Should Indian Christians remain subject to the Indian Succession Act which has been made applicable to them by the British authority. or should they seek reintegration under the Hindu Succession Act? Fr H. STAFFNER strongly advocates reintegration. And this for two reasons. Efforts at inculturating the Indian community in India are belied by the present disparity in the law of inheritance; the disabilities that ensue for Indian Christians constitute a formidable obstacle for prospective converts to Christianity. But can the present situation be changed? The author shows that it can, depending on the will of Christian communities themselves.

What Catholic Colleges Can Do for the New Society in India

Alfred DE SOUZA, S.J.*

OVER the last two so-called development decades, there has been a growing recognition of the inadequacy of the development paradigm which has, contrary to what one was led to expect, made rich countries richer and poor countries poorer and, within poor countries of the Third World, the gap between the elites and the masses of people has widened. The focus of concern and analysis has gradually shifted from growth models associated with a development strategy, to people-oriented strategies aimed at transforming the structures of society which maintain unequal and unjust social and economic relations between the rich and the poor, men and women. The concentration of economic and political power between and within countries is now seen as the outcome of political, economic and technological structures of domination. Similarly, the understanding of neo-colonialism has broadened to include cultural imperalism which controls the generation and transfer of knowledge.

In what could have been a situation of hopelessness, there is going on a worldwide search for new alternatives to society as we have it and to national and international social, economic and political institutions (Amalorpavadass 1981). On the international level, the New International Economic Order seeks to restructure economic relations between countries of the North and South so as to reduce dependency that is maintained by current patterns of trade; at the micro-level, there are action groups involved in what are called 'people's movements' which express a new ideological perspective that is centred on belief in the people and their capacity to struggle for their own liberation from dehumanizing structural forces of society.

A search for alternatives has also been going on in the education sector (Naik 1975, 1977; Freire 1971; Illich 1973) with systematic examination of the hidden assumptions and myths of the education system and its role in reproducing the division of labour and the

*Fr Alfred DE SOUZA is the Director of the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi.

stratification of society. In this paper[1] the social function of education will be analysed in the broader context of the social, economic and political structures of society. The second part of the paper will reflect on the role of Catholic colleges in society and the contribution they can make in the framework of constraints and opportunities, to the emergence of a just social order characterized by human rights, freedom and participatory processes.

Social and Economic Context

Though social justice has to do with the poor and the victims of ethnic, racial, political and religious discrimination, its primary concern is not with formulating *ad hoc* solutions to the problems of hunger and discrimination but rather with the transformation of the structures of the social system which perpetuate economic, social and power relations that are opposed to human dignity. The prevailing 'institutionalized violence' or 'established disorder' is what the new society should seek to change by "building a world where every man, no matter what his race, religion and nationality, can live a full human life, free from servitude imposed on him by other men or by natural forces over which he has no sufficient control; a world where freedom is not an empty word. . ." (*Populorum Progressio*, n. 47).

India and other underdeveloped countries of South and South-East Asia are agrarian societies whose striking features are poverty, high pressure of population on land, and the manipulation of improverished and illiterate masses of people by a small Western educated elite that monopolizes positions of privilege, power and influence in the social, economic and political spheres. The contrasts between the rich and the poor, privileged and deprived, the elite and the masses are also to be found in industrially advanced countries. But these contrasts stand out very sharply in India and the agrarian societies of South Asia because of the magnitude of the problems of poverty and social inequality which are perpetuated by feudalistic social and economic structures of society that have been reinforced by economic strategies which exclude the masses from the whole development process.

In India social relations are organized according to the hierarchical values of the caste system, which has provided ideological legitimation for the existing pattern of social stratification. The ritual distance that separates the Brahmin from the Scheduled Castes is paralleled by the economic disparities between the rich and the poor and by

1. The paper is a much abridged version of the Keynote Address to the Triennial Conference of Colleges of the Xavier Board of Higher Education in India, May 28, 1983. I am grateful for useful comments and suggestions to my colleagues at the Indian Social Institute and to the participants of the Conference.

inequalities in the distribution of education, power and privilege. In India, therefore, we have what has been called a system of 'cumulative inequalities' (Beteille 1971) or closed stratification as contrasted with a system of dispersed inequalities or open stratification such as is found in more industrialized societies.

Though the organization of society is characterized by extreme inequality in the distribution of land, income, education, social status and power, we are publicly committed in India to the creation of an egalitarian society or what has been called a 'socialistic pattern of society' in which there will be greater equalization of opportunity and more equitable distribution of resources, power and privilege The Five Year Plans are explicitly oriented to the realization of the egalitarian ideas enshrined in the constitution. The social objectives sought to be achieved by the Fourth Five Year Plan (1966: 16) are "to raise the standard of living . especially of the less privileged sections of society. Our planning should result not only in an integrated process of increased production but in rational distribution of the added wealth The overriding inspiration must be a burning sense of social justice . The benefits of development must accrue in increasing measure to the common man and to the weaker sections of society . . .by reducing disparities of income and wealth."

Disharmonic Society

The emergence of an egalitarian ideology in India marks a growing discrepancy between the 'existential order' (the actual disparities in income, education and employment opportunities that constitute the social conditions of society) and the 'normative order' which expresses the new values of social justice, human dignity and equality of opportunity (Beteille 1972). India is thus one example of 'disharmonic' societies Ideological commitment to the general welfare of the masses, which is distinctive of the new normative order has not brought out any significant improvement in the existential order, on the contrary, social and economic inequalities are increasing and marginalization of the common people is a continuing process. According to the Planning Commission, on the basis of a per capita consumption expenditure in the rural areas of Rs 76 and Rs 88 in the urban areas in 1979-80 prices, 317 million people are living below the poverty line, 50 per cent in the rural areas and 39 per cent in the urban areas.

The skewed structure of income is seen from the fact that the share of the bottom 20 per cent of the population is 7-8 per cent of the total personal income whereas that of the top 20 per cent is 45-48 per cent and the share of the highest 10 per cent is between 35 and 37

per cent. Whereas the bottom 20 per cent spend between 80-85 per cent of their income on food they are still unable to consume more than 1500 calories daily as against the Planning Commission's standard of 2400 calories. Thus the lower income families spend three-fourths of their income on food and yet remain in a state of continual malnutrition.

Studies on infant mortality show that malnutrition is the predominant cause of death and it is estimated that every year one million children die because of the consequences of malnutrition. A study done by the National Institute of Nutrition, Hyderabad, of children 0.5 years of age from lower income groups, reported that 90 per cent of these children were suffering from various degrees of malnutrishment measured in body weight deficit. Malnutrition is linked to infant morality not only directly but also indirectly since it makes poor children vulnerable to infection, gastro-enteritis and respiratory diseases. The World Bank Report (1980) has reported that, even when childhood malnourishment does not result in early death, severe malnourishment tends to affect the performance of children during their pre-school years. Thus childhood undernourishment has severe effects on mental development, educational achievement and occupational choice.

Land reforms aimed at a more equitable distribution of rural income have been rendered quite ineffective by loopholes in the law and because their implementation has been controlled by the very groups having vested interest in land. Another illustration of the paradox of bold legislation asserting social equality and the fundamental dignity of people and contradicted by everyday social practice, is the case of the Scheduled Castes. In spite of Gandhiji's campaign for the rehabilitation of the Scheduled Castes and the Constitutional abolition of untouchability, the social and economic disabilities of the Scheduled Castes remain almost unchanged and, as the atrocities reported in the press show, the situation of the Scheduled Castes has deteriorated over the years. As Pope Paul VI pointed out in *Octogesima Adveniens* (n. 23), "if, beyond legal rights, there is no deeper feeling of respect and service for others, then even equality before the law can serve as the alibi for flagrant discrimination, continued exploitation and actual contempt."

Similarly, it is common knowledge that the benefits of the Green Revolution have widened economic disparities between the poor and the upper strata of rural societies. Though modern agricultural technology is size neutral, it is not resource neutral and as a consequence of this only big farmers have been able to utilize the technology of the Green Revolution whereas small farmers have been gradually

forced into the increasing army of landless agricultural labourers (ILC 1979).

Another aspect of poverty in India is massive unemployment and particularly underemployment. The pattern of industrial develop-ment has been distorted by the concern to serve the consumer interests of a small urban minority so that production and the market conspire to exclude the wage goods needed by the majority of the people. The distortion in industrial production for the development process can be seen by the growth of consumer industries whose capital-intensive products are totally irrelevant to the needs of the majority of the population. For example, the introduction of colour TV in India has been legitimized by reference to its potential for education, national integration and the assertion of a right to recognition in the inter-national sphere It is clear that in a country which can barely afford to keep a child in primary school it is totally unrealistic to invest scarce resources in colour TV that sets out to be a medium of education but ends up being a medium of entertainment.

Education and Social Structure

This review of the conditions of social, economic and political inequalities which are characteristic of society of India shows that the 'normative' order with its egalitarian value centred in the human person has been quite ineffective in promoting social, economic and political changes consonant with social justice and human development. An enquiry into the causes of the failure of the normative system to transform the existing patterns of social and economic relations will disclose the nature of the social system in which we live and work and suggest possible points of entry for Christian colleges to transform the prevailing dehumanizing social order. The reasons suggested in this paper do not claim to be exhaustive nor is any single factor to be considered a sufficient explanation of the existing configuration of social, economic and political inequalities; but since they are inter-related, the combination of these explanatory factors may provide insights into the structure of functioning of the social system in India which leads to the marginalization and dehumanization of large masses of people.

It would appear that among the major social, economic and political factors which have made the traditional social system imper-vious to the influence of the norms of equality and social justice are the following: the colonial experience, the nature of the elites, the system of education and the cluster of attributes which Myrdal finds to be characteristic of what he calls 'Soft States'. It has been suggested

by Myrdal that the reason why the upper and middle classes can manipulate the social and economic structures of society to their own advantage, is that India is a Soft State. Under this term is included social indiscipline, corruption, excessive bureaucracy and an egalitarian and highly centralized power structure. The exploitation of the poor is possible because the poor are dispersed, unorganized and lack political skills. The masses, as Myrdal points out (1970: 223), "are too inarticulate, passive and unorganized to press their interests effectively. The absence of pressure from below thus creates this strange contrast between the egalitarian pretences, on the one hand, and the crass and increasing inequalities, on the other hand. . . ."

Colonial rule had persuasive and enduring effects on the social organization and economic and political institutions in India. Contemporary culture reflects the residual influences of British cultural values and institutions. Among the changes brought about by colonial rule, perhaps one of the most significant was the change in the character of the elites who in the traditional culture derived their power from landownership and social status associated with the higher ranks of the caste hierarchy. By making a Western education the main avenue to occupational prestige, social mobility and elite status, the British broadened the social composition of the elites without, however, affecting their exclusiveness (Basu 1974).

In India the British established an education system which embodied the traditional British belief that an exclusive secondary school system is the most effective instrument for the selection and socialization of an exclusive civil service elite. Education provided the entrants into the civil, military, business and professional elites with a system of shared values and a common style of life which was sharply differentiated from that of the common people. The elites maintain their control over positions of power, status and privilege because they monopolize the access to the kind of education which confers occupational advantages that are denied to children from the lower strata of society. Apart from political considerations, which are related to changes in the composition of the political elites, opposition to exclusive private schools is the outcome of the growing realization that existing social inequalities in income, occupation and economic power are perpetuated by differential access to educational opportunities. Exclusive private schools offer quality education to children from the upper social strata whose parents can afford to pay for it. In other words, the ability to afford a good (privileged) education becomes a function of one's position in the existing pattern of social stratification.

Even when special educational schemes have been instituted by the government to raise the social and economic standards of the underprivileged they have not been able to compete with children from the upper classes for entry into the specialized institutions of professional and higher education and high status occupations. For example, the scholarships awarded to Scheduled Castes have not brought about any significant change in the situation of Scheduled Caste students. The literacy rate of Scheduled Castes was only 14.7 per cent in 1971 and research studies which were done in 1972 and 1980 showed that Scheduled Castes students continue to be educationally backward because of stagnation and high dropout rates and also because they tend to cluster in inferior colleges (Chitnis 1972; Aikara 1980).

Social Function of Catholic Colleges

The dependent colonial economy which we have inherited is the dual economy with exploitative relations between the urban and the rural sectors, and this dualism is also reflected in the urban economy in the dependency and exploitation of the informal sector by the formal or organised sector Corresponding to this economic dualism is also the dualistic character of the education system in which private schools are for the urban elites and government schools for the masses. This dual system of education which was set in motion by the British was merely expanded and not changed after independence. Today, as earlier under colonial rule, "concentration, since 1835 on the urbanised upper and middle classes led to the neglect of the masses education. The education system became top heavy and lopsided" (Basu 1982: 65).

In the context of a dependent neo-colonial economy the model of development we accepted placed stress on the growth of a modern, highly industrialised and capital intensive sector which, it was thought, would gradually "filter" down to the impoverished masses. The education system was geared to providing the higher level technical manpower required for modern industry and colleges and other professional institutions of higher education were set up to cater to this need. This policy of using colleges and universities for the creation of high level manpower has had a number of unintended consequences. On the one hand, there is a total imbalance in educational expenditure on higher education as compared with secondary and primary education. In 1970-71 primary schools with an enrolment of over 411 lakhs were allotted 24.40 per cent of the educational budget, whereas higher education with an enrolment of 24 lakhs received not less than 24·80

per cent of the educational budget (Karlekar 1983: 208). In the context of the education system as we have it, this pattern of expenditure gives rise to the paradox of a large number of children being excluded from the educational system and at the same time vast sums of money are spent on preparing graduates who swell the numbers of the educated unemployed. As several analyses of higher education have noted, (Illchman 1974: 129), "it is quite correct to say that for the skills necessary in the work most graduates do the university is irrelevant except as an elite-identifying mechanism." Because of the combination of misguided educational policies and the occupational structure, education becomes a substitute for employment and by strange quirk of perception the responsibility for unemployment is placed not on society but on the hapless individual and his family.

In the context of the role of education in the economy, how was the role of Christian colleges conceptualised in the historical process ? As Dickinson (1971) has noted, Christian colleges experienced the problem of balancing their religious objectives with their perception of the needs of society and the constraints imposed by government policy. Thus there was an evolution of the goals of Christian colleges as they interacted with the changing social and political environment in which they functioned. There was a movement back and forth between tendencies to parochialise the colleges as an instrument for strengthening the Church and the Christian community and to prepare leaders not only for the Church but for modern democratic society. Depending on how Christian colleges interpreted their role in this interaction between their religious purposes and societal needs, great importance was given to a character formation, discipline and the inculcation of personal (individualistic) values. With exceptions, there was a general failure to assert the independence of Christian colleges from political alliances offered by the government and to conceptualize with clarity the social function of Christian involvement in higher education. Christian colleges tended to accept uncritically the need to align themselves with the colonial government, and, after independence, with the ruling party. As the appropriateness of government policies on higher education was largely unquestioned, so too the structures of society in which the colleges functioned were not critically examined and challenged but accepted as part of the rational scheme of things.

It is a paradox that Catholic colleges, whose rationale is derived from their sense of mission and their religious purpose, are not perceived to have successfully accomplished what is seen as their main task of religious formation, however it is understood. The recent study of Catholic colleges in India (Murickan 1981: 174-183) suggests that Catholic colleges are rated high on competence and academic perfor-

mance and rather low on the teaching of religion and the achievement of their specific mission (ibid.: 187); in fact, the specific mission of Catholic colleges, interpreted as bearing witness to Christ and instilling Christian values among non-Christians, is given low priority. So also Catholic colleges are rated relatively low on the index of concern for social justice. This may be an indication of the way in which Catholic colleges actually function in society, irrespective of the broad religious purposes for which they have been set up, and the constraints of the environment (government control and parental aspirations). The traditional religious goals which the Catholic colleges continue to affirm were conceived when Catholic colleges were highly selective and functioned as channels for upward social mobility and the formation of social, economic and political elites. However, when the social base of the students body has expanded, Catholic colleges experience a conflict in balancing structures which were oriented to elite selection with education for the preparation of men and women who have to enter into clerical and lower administrative positions in government and the teaching profession.

What Can Catholic Colleges Do?

The administration of Catholic colleges, largely because of the concern with the mission of the Church and the distinctive charism of religious congregations, tends to be highly centralized with the concentration of power in the principal (Heredia 1981; Altbach 1972). In this administrative structure it is assumed that the faculty understands and shares the value system and broader social and religious purposes for which the administration stands. This perception of faculty spontaneously sharing in the value system of the management in colleges most often does not correspond with reality, and not only is the management confused about what its specific charism or mission is but so also are members of the staff. As a result of this lack of clarity the orientation of a Catholic college tends to be influenced to a great extent by the values of a liberalism which, however enlightened, is rarely examined. Thus the important aspect of intellectual acceptance of purpose and cooperation in its accomplishment is most often lacking in Catholic colleges since the staff has little or no role in the management of the college. If the Catholic college is to contribute to the emergence of a new society in which freedom and fellowship are characteristic, participatory processes must also be distinctive of the college administration. Thus change in orientation and innovation in the college programmes would be the outcome of a cooperative effort of study and reflection of the principal with the staff. Today it would be totally inadequate to consider the principal merely as the manager

of an educational enterprise or even a mediator between staff and students, a public relations person or fund-raiser. Particularly now when it is a question of basic reorientation what Catholic colleges need is not so much an administrator, a mediator or a fund-raiser but an educational leader who, through study and reflection with the staff can unmask the mechanisms of marginalization and oppression and share a common vision with the staff and students.

Another problem with Catholic colleges as with other minority colleges, is the reluctance to participate actively in public issues. Currently Catholic colleges are hesitant to speak out not only on controversial issues but even on public issues which have implications of immense significance for society. Therefore Catholic colleges must rethink their role not only in the narrow framework of higher education but in the broader framework of society. It is rather disturbing that Catholic colleges where young people are being trained to look critically at themselves and society, have very little to say to the government or to the public on major social, economic and political issues agitating society. Catholic colleges have not been in any way prominent in condemning atrocities against the Scheduled Castes in different parts of the country or in voicing solidarity with the poor and the oppressed; nor have Catholic colleges expressed their social concern about the massacre in Assam and the communal situation in the Punjab.

While it may be true that this reluctance to engage in public commentary on major social, economic and political issues may stem from a minority complex, probably an equally important reason may be the large scale failure of those in the education sector, particularly management and staff, to develop the tools and skills for systematic social analysis. Nothing is more deceptive than common-sense perceptions of the education system since it very often accomplishes the opposite of what it sets out to do and the equalization of educational opportunity is a typical instance of structural distortion.

The tendency of the Church has been to be committed to Christian community and to those who are expected to become members by conversion. Paradoxically, in spite of the wide network of social welfare institutions, the Church and Catholic colleges do not project an image of commitment to society. Writing about the situation of the Church in Latin America, Segundo (1978: 43) suggests that "alliances" between the Church and political authorities "inevitably turn the Church's attention away from the most glaring and fundamental human and social problems and focus it on Christian institutions. Its lack of interest in society and its structures is taken for granted, and its public declarations against injustice or for liberation are not

enough to convince people otherwise." But the struggle for a new society in which there is freedom, fellowship and equality requires the Church to be committed to the transformation of society as we have it and to the creation of an environment in which people can be free to become human. This societal commitment of the Church and the Catholic colleges will necessarily involve a political dimension, though the very absence of a commitment to society is itself an expression of a political option.

Today Catholic colleges must be in the forefront of reflection and action on the political realities of society while retaining their independence from the machinations of political parties. The struggle for justice, for freedom and for conditions of human life for millions of people who are poor and powerless, will need the growth of a highly motivated Catholic intelligentsia. It is significant that even a staid and conservative institution like the Supreme Court has recently undergone a dramatic change in orientation so that it intends to become, as Justice Bhagwati stated, not the Supreme Court of India but the Supreme Court for Indians.

One does not notice a dramatic change in the orientation and performance of Catholic colleges even though the rhetoric of social justice and solidarity with the poor resounds in the campus. The acceptance of a political involvement will require Catholic colleges to clarify for themselves the relationship between their religious identity and their social and political relations with government and the different constituencies that make up society. The reluctance to accept the political dimension of education may be related to the historical practice of the Church in colonial society when the tendency was to resolve political problems not at the political level but at the level of social welfare.

If Catholic colleges are to make any meaningful commitment to the struggle for a new society, this will necessarily involve the development of 'solidarity' with the poor and the exploited who need the cooperation of other groups to liberate themselves from the social, economic and political structures which keep them in bondage. The study of Catholic colleges (Murickan 1981: 158) reports that 45 per cent of the principals, 46 per cent of teachers and 36 per cent of students, 39 per cent of chaplains and 61 per cent of alumni rated the colleges 'poor' and 'mediocre' in terms of 'solidarity with the poor and oppressed of the country and of the world'. The notion of solidarity is complex and the extreme meanings it is given by groups at opposite ends of the ideological spectrum tend either to make participation in the struggle for the new society too restrictive or, on the other hand, to broaden the concept to make it all-inclusive and meaningless (Dickinson 1983: 168).

Conclusion

What should be the response of Christian colleges to a situation in which over 300 million people in the rural and urban areas are systematically deprived of the conditions necessary for their human growth ? This situation of poverty and inequality, as we noted earlier in this paper, cannot be explained away by reference to the paradigm of tradition and modernity or any inherent psychological inadequacy; rather we need a systematic analysis of society to understand how economic, social and political structures interact at various levels to promote not the development of people in freedom and fellowship but their dehumanization. It is the task of the Church and the colleges under its sponsorship to proclaim the presence of Christ as liberator in the struggle for justice and human dignity and to create an environment for the reconciliation of poor and oppressed who are alienated by the structures of society from their vocation to be human.

The theme of the humanization of society has been developed by Pope John Paul II in his encyclical 'Redeemer of Man' in which he proposed what he calls 'authentic humanism' defined as 'solidarity' with the underprivileged and oppressed men and women in the historical conditions of society today. Thus a primary task of the Church (and of Catholic institutions) is to promote human rights. In the struggle for a new society, justice, and freedom from exploitation is an essential part of the evangelizing mission of the Church and not subordinated to it as a secondary task.

It happens that under the guise of not intervening in politics, the Church and Catholic institutions such as colleges, have tended to go along with the economic and social policies of the government and have not taken a critical approach from the perspective of human rights and social justice. What is needed, therefore, most urgently is that the Church and Catholic colleges undertake a systematic critique of society and participate as partners with the poor and exploited in the transformation of the social, economic and political structures that prevent the emergence of the new society of justice and freedom.

There has developed over the last decade a new cultural and social consciousness in the Church and this is seen in the kind of issues discussed and the focus on structural situations that have social, moral, political and religious significance. The emergence of the new society will not be a gift of the elites but the outcome of a collaborative effort in solidarity with the people. Social movements among the rural and urban poor indicate an awakening and are signs of hope that the poor can overcome their powerlessness and organize themselves to

act upon the structures that oppress them. In this great awakening nd qualitative change in consciousness, Catholic colleges have the resources to present the vision of a more human society and to prepare a technical and professional leadership that will not be preoccupied with occupational prestige and social power but be increasingly oriented to service and action in solidarity with the poor for the liberation of all people from every form of oppression and exploitation.

References

ADISESHIAH, Malcolm, *Poverty. Let's Fight it.* Sixth Juhanon Mar Thoma Memorial Lecture (New Delhi. 1982).

AIKARA, Jacob. *Scheduled Castes and Higher Education* (Poona: Dastane Ramachandra, 1980)

ALTBACH, Philip G. *The University in Transition* (Bombay: Sindhu Publications, 1972)

AMALORPAVADASS, D. S. (ed). *The Indian Church in the Struggle for a New Society* (Bangalore NBCLC, 1981)

BASU, Aparna. *Education and Political Development in India*: 1878-1920 (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1974).

BASU, Aparna *Essays in the History of Indian Education* (New Delhi: Concept Publishing House, 1982)

BETEILLE, André. "The Social Framework of Agriculture", in Louis LEFEBER and M. Datta CHAUDHURI (eds), *Regional Development. Experiences and Prospects in South and South-East Asia* (The Hague: Mouton, 1971).

BETEILLE, André. *Inequality and Social Change* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1972).

CHITNIS, Suma "Education for Equality: Case of Scheduled Castes in Higher Education", *Economic and Political Weekly*, 7 (n. 31-33, August 1972)

Citizens for Democracy. Education for Our People (New Delhi. Allied Publishers, 1978).

DICKINSON, Richard D N. *The Christian College in Developing India* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1971).

DICKINSON, Richard D. N. *Poor, Yet Making Many Rich* (Geneva. World Council of Churches, 1983).

FREIRE, Paulo *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (New York· Herder and Herder, 1971).

HEREDIA, R C. *Structure and Performance of College Education* (Bombay: Somaiya Publications, 1981).

ILLCHMAN, Warren F. "People in Plenty: Educated Unemployment in India", in Amrit SINGH and Philip G. ALTBACH (eds), *The Higher Learning in India* (Delhi: Vikas, 1974)

ILLICH, Ivan *Deschooling Society* (Middlesex. Penguin Books, 1973).

ILO. *A Time for Transition: A Mid-Term Review of the Second United Nations Development Decade* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 1975)

ILO *Profiles of Rural Poverty* (Geneva: International Labour Organization, 1979).

KARLEKAR, Malavika. "Education and Inequality", in André BETEILLE (ed.), *Equality and Inequality: Theory and Practice* (New Delhi. Oxford University Press, 1983).

MURICKAN, J. *Catholic Colleges in India* (Mangalore: Xavier Board of Higher Education, 1981).

MYRDAL, Gunnar. *Asian Drama* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1968).

MYRDAL, Gunnar. *The Challenge of World Poverty* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1970).

NAIK, J. P. *Policy and Performance in Indian Education* 1947-74 (New Delhi: Orient Longman, 1975).

NAIK, J. P *Some Perspectives on Non-Formal Education* (New Delhi: Allied Publishers, 1977).

SANTA ANA, Julio (ed.). *Towards a Church of the Poor* (Geneva: World Council of Churches, 1979).

SEGUNDO, Juan Luis. *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action* (New York: Orbis Books, 1978).

Baptism and the Law of Inheritance

H. STAFFNER, SJ.

INDIA is the only country in the world in which baptism entails a change of the law of inheritance. If a Hindu accepts baptism he ceases to be under the Hindus Succession Act; from the moment of baptism his property inheritance is ruled by the Indian Succession Act. The Hindu Succession Act contains the traditional law of India; the Indian Succession Act is the English law of inheritance made applicable to foreigners residing in India and to Indian Christians. By the fact that the English Law has been made applicable to them in place of the traditional Indian law Christians have been marked as foreigners. A Hindu cannot become a Christian without legally becoming a foreigner in his own country.

Today there is much talk of inculturation; there is a strong insistence that a Hindu, when becoming a Christian, need not culturally become a European. As long as the fact remains that a convert to the Christian religion has to exchange the Indian law of inheritance for the English law, all the talk of inculturation is not very convincing. Facts are more eloquent than words.

How the English Law Became Applicable to Indian Christians

When the Muslims invaded India they brought along with them their own civil law, the Islamic law, the Shariat. Though they did not accept the law of the land in which they came to reside but kept their own law, they could not, in civil matters, impose the Islamic law on the rest of the population. Thus it came about that in regard to property and inheritance India has no national law, but what is called a personal law: Muslims follow the Islamic law, the rest of the population continue to follow the traditional Indian law. As all Indians who were not Muslims were called Hindus, the traditional Indian law became known as the Hindu law.

When the British became the dominant power in India they first tried to apply the English law to all their subjects, particularly as they regarded the English law as 'the perfection of human wisdom'. Soon

they realized that the English law did not fit Indian conditions and that their zeal in enforcing it led to grave discontent. They accepted therefore the rule introduced by the Moghul Emperors and applied the Islamic law to Muslims and the traditional Indian law to others. An act of Parliament in 1781 approved of this procedure.

Converts to Christianity

The question arose whether converts to Christianity remained subject to the Hindu law. In 1863 a case involving this question was referred to Her Majesty's Privy Council. Delivering the judgement, the Right Hon. Lord Kingsdown declared:

> '... Upon the conversion of a Hindu to Christianity the Hindu law ceases to have any continuing obligatory force upon the convert. He may renounce the old law by which he was bound, as he renounced his old religion, or, if he thinks fit, he may abide by the old law notwithstanding he has renounced the old religion.

Lord Kingsdown based this judgement on the following reasoning:

> The profession of Christianity releases the convert from the trammels of the Hindu law, but does not of necessity involve any change of the rights or relations of the convert in matters with which Christianity has no concern, such as his rights and interest in, or his powers over, property [1]

According to this decision Christians had the choice to remain under the Hindu law as regards property and inheritance or to renounce this law. There were two classes of Christians. Many had accepted Fr De Nobili's principle that a convert changes his form of worship but not his cultural and social standing: such Christians were inclined to remain under the traditional Indian law. Of the others it was reported that "they follow in everything the ways of the British Resident", their cases being judged under the English law.

How the English Law Became Applicable to All Indian Christians

The British felt the need of providing a law of inheritance for European residents in India as also for Indian Christians who were not inclined to remain under the Hindu Law. In 1865 they passed the Indian Succession Act which applied the English law to such people. In this Act it is not stated that it is applicable to all Indian Christians. What is definitely stated is that it does not apply to Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists; the term 'Hindu' in the court language of that time included also Sikhs, Jains, etc. Thus more than 97 per cent of the people of India were exempted from the Indian Succession Act.

The question of exempting Indian Christians from this Act did not arise for the simple reason that it was meant to supply a law to those

1. Julian SALDANHA, *Conversion and Indian Civil Law*, Bangalore, 1981, p. 95.

Christians who did not want to remain under the Hindu law. The possibility of giving Christians the option of remaining under the old law or of accepting this new Act was not deemed feasible because it was regarded too bothersome to inquire in each case what was the wish of the deceased.

The British government, however, had no intention of forcing the English law on Christians who preferred to remain under the traditional Indian law. They provided, therefore, an option for any group of people who preferred to remain under the traditional law to apply for an exemption from the Indian Succession Act.

Section 332 of the Indian Succession Act states:

> The Governor-General of India in Council shall from time to time have power, by an Order, either retrospectively from the passing of this Act, or prospectively, to exempt from the operation of the whole or any part of this Act the members of any race, sect or tribe, to whom he may consider it impossible or inexpedient to apply the provisions of this Act, or of the part of the Act mentioned in the Order ....[2]

Christians in Mysore did object to being brought under the English law. Accordingly, by a notification dated 23 July 1886, the Governor-General exempted all native Christians in the province of Coorg from the operation of the Indian Succession Act with retrospective effect. Many tribals such as Oraons, Gonds, Halbas, Garos, Mundas, etc., were also exempted from this Act and remained under their tribal laws.[3]

Most Christians did not protest and thus the English law was made applicable to them. Thus it came about that baptism entailed a change of the law of inheritance. People who reflected on this situation were struck by the enormity of forcing a person to change his law of inheritance merely because he changes his religious opinion.

The custom of inheriting according to the Hindu law had remained prevalent in the Christian Koli (fishermen) community in Bombay. In the case Dagree *v.* Pacotti San Jao the question came up before the Bombay High Court (19/1895, Bom 783-790) whether the English law of inheritance had to be imposed on Christians even against their will. Macpherson, Acting Advocate General, who was Counsel of the appellant Dagree, argued that this could not possibly have been the intention of the legislature as it would have meant imposing a penal law. He argued that "to substitute the English law of inheritance, as prescribed by that Act, for the Hindu law, would result in breaking up the social system of the Hindus." To enforce this change by legis-

2. Quoted by J. SALDANHA, op. cit., p. 98.
3. Cf. J. SALDANHA, op. cit., pp. 98-99.

lation upon all who embrace a particular form of religious beliefis, tantamount to penalizing them for a mere opinion, and "amounts to religious persecution".

If Muslims are exempted from the Succession Act, this is not because they profess certain religious beliefs, but because they possess a law of succession of their own. *Hindus are excluded from the Act for the same reason. Surely the legislature could not have intended to deprive them of their personal law and impose on them a foreign law quite repugnant to their ideas, if they should change their views and become Christians. "Why should the adoption of Christianity involve a change in the law of succession ?", the Counsel asked. Such a change is necessarily involved in the adoption of Islam, because* Muhammad transmitted a system both of religion and of law, and both must be accepted by a Muslim. "But the founder of Christianity taught no law, and the Christian faith may be accepted and professed under any system of law and without any change of law."[4]

Some judges admitted the plea of Hindu converts to Christianity hat by baptism they had changed their form of worship but not their ocial status, and judged their cases according to the Hindu law.[5] Generally however, it was held that the Indian Succession Act was applicable to all Christians. After Independence the Supreme Court has repeatedly insisted that any person professing the Christian faith must be judged according to the Indian Succession Act. The reason, am told, is that the judge must have a definite norm to go by.

Consequences of Changing the Law of Inheritance

One consequence is that Indian Christians are made to look like oreigners since they do not follow the traditional Indian law but the English law which the British Government has made applicable to them.

Another consequence is that conversion to Christianity has been made needlessly difficult since a convert has to change his law of inheritance and bears the legal consequences of this change which are very grave: he becomes legally separated from his family and is disinherited.

Owing to the change of law of inheritance a convert becomes legally separated from his family:

> Conversion of a member of the joint family to Christianity operates as a severance of the joined status between him and the other members of the joint family, but not as a severance of the other members *inter se*. It extinguishes the right of survivorship as between the convert and his copartners (or joint heirs). He ceases to be a copartner from the moment of his conversion and is

4. J. SALDANHA, op. cit., pp. 100-102.
5. Cf. S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Religion and Society*, London, 1948, p. 116.

entitled to receive his share in the joint family property as it stood at that date of conversion.[6]

The children of the convert are disqualified from inheriting property from any of their Hindu relatives:

> ... children born to him or her after such conversion and their descendents shall be disqualified from inheriting the property of any of their Hindu relatives.[7]

It is a fact that baptism has become a problem in India for many who believe in Christ, precisely because it is connected with things which have nothing to do with religion, like the change of law of inheritance. Manilal C. Parekh, the well-known Gujarati convert, states:

> *It is no exaggeration to say that today the most difficult question facing the Church of Christ in India is that of baptism of the new disciples. That this is so is largely or altogether due to the fact that baptism has become associated with a number of things which are not only unessential but are even harmful to the spiritual life of such disciples ....*

What makes the acceptance of baptism such a problem is the fact that it legally separates the convert from his family and his community, a separation which is founded on the change of the law of inheritance. M. C. Parekh states:

> Baptism has come to mean absolute severance from one's own community, from one's own birth and kin, from one's own national cultural and spiritual inheritance ....[8]

As a consequence we have now in India lakhs, if not millions, of 'non-baptized believers in Christ', people who believe in Christ but do not see how they can accept baptism as long as this entails changing their social community.[9]

Is it Possible to Change the Present Situation?

If Christians are willing to make an effort it would seem possible to change the present situation. E. D. Devadason, the author of the book *Christian Law in India,* has pointed out that the Indian Succession Act is in some ways old-fashioned and in need of being amended. He maintains that the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 is a better law, well adapted to modern conditions, which would suit the requirements of the Indian Christian community better than the Indian Succession Act. Devadason therefore called on the Indian Christians to agitate in order that the Hindu Succession Act be made applicable to them.

6. D. F. Mulla, *Principles of Hindu Law,* para 334.
7. *The Hindu Succession Act,* 1956, section 26.
8. Quoted by R. H. S. Boyd, *Manilal Parekh,* Madras, 1974, p. 56.
9. Cf. H. E. Hoefer, "Why Baptism after Conversion", *Indian Missiological Review,* January 1983, pp. 74-82.

He had no other intention than to provide the Indian Christians with a better law.[10]

Is Such Agitation Likely to Be Successful?

One of the foremost concerns of the Government of India is to promote national integration, and article 44 of the Indian Constitution gives the following directive principle of State policy:

> The State shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India

If Christians ask that the Hindu Succession Act be made applicable to them as well, it will be a significant step towards greater national integration and fully in line with the above mentioned directive principle of State policy. It is likely, therefore, that government will welcome such an agitation and grant such a request. The Hindu community is also likely to welcome such a step.

Another way of changing the present situation would be for Christians to avail themselves of the option given by the Indian Succession Act itself to apply for exemption from this Act. In the amended Indian Succession Act of 1925 this option is retained in S. 3. The power to exempt any group of people from this Act is now given to the State Government Either the whole Christian community or any group of Christians could apply for exemption from this Act if they can show that it is inexpedient that this Act be applied to them, as the Christians of Coorg have done.

The Hindu Law and the Christian Faith

Some people may feel uneasy at the thought of Christians volunteering to live under a Hindu law. It is good to keep in mind that the term 'Hindu', in the sense in which it is used in the Hindu Succession Act, has no connection with any tenet of the Hindu religion or with any form of worship.

When the Hindu Succession Act was debated in Parliament some people took exception to the term 'Hindu' in the bill. In reply to this objection the Law Minister, Shri Pataskar, pointed out that through the ancient practice of the Court the term 'Hindu' is recognized as applicable to many groups of people who are governed by the Hindu law, although they differ in their form of worship. He went on:

> The word 'Hindu' does not denote any particular religion nor any form of worship, nor does it denote any particular community.[11]

---

10. See *National Christian Council Review*, 1973, p. 289.
11. Cf. J. SALDANHA, op. cit., p. 123.

Legal commentaries stress the same fact:

> *The word 'Hindu' does not denote any particular religion or community. It has been applied to dissenters and non-conformists and even to those who entirely repudiated Brahmanism..., but nevertheless continued to live under the Hindu law.*[12]

The meaning of the term 'Hindu' is clear also from the wording of the Act itself. The Hindu Succession Act states:

> This Act applies:
> a) to any person who is Hindu by religion in any of its forms or developments, including a Virshaiva, a Lingayat or a follower of the Brahmo, Prarthana or Arya Samaj;
> b) to any person who is a Jaina, Buddhist or Sikh by religion;
> c) to any person who is not a Muslim, Christian, Parsi or Jew by religion.

It is clear that being a Hindu, in the legal sense of the term, does not depend on holding any definite religious opinion. Lingayats deny the authority of the Hindu Shastras and reject worship, Brahmanical rites and caste distinctions; yet they are regarded as Hindus.

Nor does it depend on professing any particular religion: Jainas Buddhists, Sikhs have their own distinct religion; yet they are counted as Hindus in the legal sense of the term.

In fact the term Hindu is applied to any group of persons residing in India who have not brought their own law of inheritance along with them when they came to India as did the Muslims, Parsis and Jews, or to whom a foreign law was not made applicable as it happened to the Indian Christians.

The extent to which the Hindu law has been secularized is plain from the fact that the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 contains principles which are contrary to the teaching of the Shastras, like the equality of men and women before the law; consequently no attempt is made to show that this law is based on the authority of the Shastras.

Conclusion

It is of course possible to leave things as they are; but if we take inculturation seriously we can hardly feel at ease as long as becoming a disciple of Christ means renouncing the traditional Indian law and accepting an English law. Nor can we claim to be earnest about spreading the Kingdom of Christ if, knowing what an obstacle the present law of inheritance constitutes for prospective converts to Christianity, we do nothing to remove it when we could do so.

---

12. D. F. MULLA, op. cit., p. 786.

"Seek and You Shall Find"

Educational Pilgrimage with the Poor

Joseph Murray ABRAHAM, *S.J.*

Part 1: **Experience Speaks**

Mysterious Family

It is a mystery. The facts are clear. It's their interpretation that is elusive. There is no difficulty in describing what is happening, it seems impossible to explain how or why. The answer to one question would unlock the meaning of the mystery. Why does our family at Woodcot live in extraordinary, exquisite peace, joy and love?

We are 82 human beings Among us there are ten differences for every similarity. We are every colour in the human spectrum. We are of four faiths: Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, Christian. We are of every age, from the just-now-born to the creaky-jointed! Some are illiterate; some in high school or college; some are graduates. There is one difference that should destroy our family, a difference rooted in India's hoary history, in the ancient custom of caste. A few of our family come from the highest caste; many more from the lowest and some have no caste at all.

And so, the mystery. What has brought together this haphazard mixture of human beings and blended us into a family that has — not always, not perfectly, but still to a startling degree — one mind, one heart, one life? I think I know the explanation of this mystery. To me it is persuasive, satisfying; but to others it will seem ridiculously implausible. For what I think is our bond of union, the majority of people consider the burden of life. But before we turn to philosophy which may give us reasons, let us consult history which does give us facts.

Twenty-Five-Year Search

For twenty-five years I have been trying to find a way to educate the poorest children in and around Kurseong so that they can become free, responsible, resourceful human beings developing themselves and helping to develop the resources of the community in which they live. Beginning with 5-year old children I have been trying to evolve a system of education that comes to grips with the reality of poverty and tries to solve its problems. The years have been full of groping, of fumbling, of false starts and failures. But there has been growth and progress too. An educational method has been emerging as the

children — now some of them young men and women — have developed, as the situation has changed around us and as we have changed the situation.

A few years ago we came to a crossroads. Many reasons made it obvious that the poor young people I was working with could never liberate themselves from poverty if they lived in single family units. The surest way for them to achieve a human standard of living and to provide themselves with satisfying employment was to work together in food-producing families of 80 to 100 members.

Learning Extended Family Living

In the evolution of our educational system, an evolution not determined by theories but by the realities around us, by our poverty, by our human and physical resources, by the on-going process we were both carrying forward and being carried forward by, we had entered a new phase in our development. We had to add a new course to our curriculum. We had to learn how to become a community, how to form ourselves into a family. There would be no passing out into freedom unless we passed this course in community-building. And it was a course that could only be learned by being lived.

Originally I thought it would work this way: up until the end of high school our boys and girls would study in the regular school, get work training in food-producing projects, and live at home with their families. The Work Scholarship program would provide all their educational expenses. After matriculation they would come together into a single community. While carrying on their studies at college, they would learn how to live together as a food-producing extended family. This does remain the plan and even now the general pattern. But when dealing with people who are starving, or homeless, with people incapable of surviving without help *now*, you can seldom allow yourself the luxury of flying to your destination according to a carefully plotted flight plan. Helping the desperately poor often means not doing what you planned, but doing what you can.

This explains why in our community of 82, only 23 have conformed to the "plan", have completed their matric and are now in college. 19 boys and girls are still going to school. 6 students are being prepared to take their matric privately. Another 12 are school drop-outs and are taking all their training in our institute which is an agricultural training centre, a food-producing business and a home. The remaining 22 members of our family did not enter this community by passing through the preparatory stages. They are here because they were helpless widows with children, or orphans or chronically sick. Some have come because they wanted to help. These "exceptions", this random harvest of the poor has added an essential ingredient to our community. If I had stuck to my pre-conceived plan, we would not be the family we are today. It has been the babies, the widows, the sick and the retarded who have saved our house from becoming just another college hostel and have transformed it into a home.

If you have ever wondered why so few educational experiments for the poor are being carried on, here you have the reason. When

evolving a new system of education, you must step out into the unknown. When God calls Abraham out of the land of Ur, he doesn't tell him his final destination. He simply says: "Leave your home and the land of your people and come to the land that I will show you." In trying to find a way to educate the poor, at every stage I have had to join hands with that other Abraham "as he set out without knowing where he was going". This was also the attitude of Mahatma Gandhi as he led the people of India to the promised land of "swaraj". Gandhi asked God to guide him day by day. That's why his favourite hymn was Cardinal Newman's

Lead, kindly Light, lead thou me on!
I do not ask to see the distant scene,
One step enough for me!

When I looked around at the community I had gathered, I shuddered. Putting this conglomeration of human beings under one roof, I expected not merely difficulties, but disasters Slums with their filth, failure, bitterness, idleness, bickering, stealing, gambling, drunkenness and despair could hardly have provided an atmosphere in which these young people could learn the patience, kindness, self-control needed to live together as a united family Wasn't putting so many teenaged boys and girls from deprived backgrounds into the same house to invite continual emotional explosions, entanglements, even tragedies? What was I doing? Why was I leaving my secure high school? Wasn't the education-through-work programme enough? Why not be satisfied with the food-production projects at school and forget about the future of these poor students? And of all men in the universe wasn't I the most unfit by temperament and training to "father forth" this paradoxical family? Like a horde of rats, doubts gnawed at my mind.

But God will have his way and now we have the mystery. What magic, what gift, what grace has transformed a group of the alienated, of slum scum, of marginalized people into a family living in one home and loving with one heart?

The Unifier

There is only one explanation of this mystery. The core of our community, 60 young people and myself, are one today because for years we shared an unusual experience. Day after day, year after year, we have worked together at a challenging, difficult job. To raise the money needed for education, money for food and fees, books and clothes, we have operated a poultry for thousands of birds on the roof of our school. Together we have produced millions of eggs. Everyone of them had to be picked up, recorded, cleaned, packed, weighed and marketed. Together we have produced tons of chicken meat. Each bird had to be killed, cleaned, dressed, weighed, priced, wrapped in plastic and sold to hotels, hostels, shops and to customers on the street.

During those years, during hundreds of hours doing dirty but worthwhile work together, as the children grew in skill, wisdom and

age, I grew in wonder and gratitude. I knew something marvellous was happening to us all. Sometimes standing in our mountain stream, feet numb with cold as we washed egg trays together, looking around at these slum children, undersized from undernourishment, dressed in rags, I would be amazed at their cheerfulness and courage. Our poultry was more than a food-producing operation. Our work was more than work. It was a struggle against poverty and all its evils. We were fighting our own little battle in the great war millions of poor people are fighting in backward villages and city "busties" all over India. We were experiencing together that precious comraderie of companions-in-arms, "We few, we happy few, we band of brothers." Work had given us solidarity. It had made us one.

The Liberator

Perhaps work of any kind unites people. But the poultry work not only made these poor children one, it also made them free. Though it was difficult, monotonous, tiring, demanding, still it freed them from the physical prison of their slums and from the psychological prison of their helplessness. It freed them to become what young people in India want to be: students in schools and colleges. There, too, it freed them from being beggars, students on stipends who could not pay their way, as others did. Work saved them from the humiliation of years of handouts, from the paralysis that so often destroys the initiative of people continually on the dole.

But their work together in the poultry did far more for these poor students than provide money and preserve dignity; more too than free them from their personal needs. Had it done only that, it might have been vitiated by selfishness. But this food-producing work was also a response to a national need. In a country where millions are underfed or live under the threat of famine, in a poor country that has to pay out to rich countries a great deal of its meagre resources to buy food, in a country whose crops are often swept away by floods or shrivelled up by droughts, in a country like India, a food-producer is not only a worker; he is also a liberator. No one can work, knowing that he is feeding the hungry, making life possible for others, and not experience wonder, gratitude, awe. It is to become a partner with God himself, the prime food-producer, who makes the rain to fall and the seed to grow. In their work, then, these poor students become fellow-workers with God and with all the food-producers of India who are today our true "freedom fighters". They fight on the frontier where freedom begins. For the country that is not free from hunger is not free at all.

And let us not say that children do not understand these truths. Children often hold in their grasp ideas that it takes adults years of pondering to understand. Understand children often do, though articulate they seldom can. Here too the words of scripture are operative:

> I bless you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth,
> for hiding these things from the learned and clever
> and revealing them to mere children.

No one understands better than hungry children how marvellous food-producing work is since it frees them from the pangs of hunger and fills them with the gift of life.

Educate to Collaborate

But as an educational process, our poultry work answered another urgent modern need. As the world shrinks to a global village, as more and more countries must co-operate or perish, as socialization inevitably increases, as men move relentlessly towards a greater collectivity, the individualistic education of the past becomes as relevant as a dinosaur. The new education, while safeguarding the unique value of each person, must educate children not as isolated individuals, each selfishly intent only upon his own progress and success; but as members of a group, each other-oriented, aware that today the old truth has taken on a new, urgent significance: "united we stand, divided we fall."

Our poultry work taught us this too. It was first, last and always team work Only because 200 children worked as one could they get this complicated, scientific job done. As we worked we learned, not as a mental abstraction but as a living fact, that God did not create us as a multitude of individuals. He created the family of man, a family in which each individual discovers and develops himself by working with others to provide for common needs. Working as a team, interacting and sharing as members of a family, we were getting daily education and exercise in what our modern world, haunted by nuclear war and hungering for peace, needs most of all, unifying brotherly love.

The Equalizer

But the world is divided and in danger of destruction today principally because of the curse of inequality. Countries are either rich or poor, developed or underdeveloped, powerful or weak, listened to and respected, or ignored and despised. Peace and justice cannot function, cannot survive in a social atmosphere so poisoned by inequality. But like all evils, this worldwide evil has its origin in individual human hearts. There will be no equality in the world or in the structures of society, until individuals accept the statement, "all men are born equal", not as a theory to be discussed and elaborated but as a truth to be practised and lived. And is there any more effective practice in equality than manual work done together? A piece of work to be done doesn't recognize status, prestige, power, popularity or influence. This benign equalizing power of work was most startling with myself. My age, my experience, my college degrees, my years in the hallowed halls of Jesuit learning — none of these things made any significant difference when I had a pile of manure to shovel or a tray of eggs to clean. Chicken feed didn't jump off my scoop and distribute itself more quickly in deference to my gray hairs. The stench of chicken waste didn't politely refrain from entering my nostrils because they quivered with the combined wisdom of Aristotle and Saint Thomas. I was simply a worker like any other, like anyone of the hundreds of boys and girls all around me.

Few people realize this amazing equalizing power of work. This makes the daily work period a salutary experience for us all. It's good for adults in authority to realize that though offices and classrooms may be ruled by pontifical fiat, five thousand chickens are not overawed by the might of Caesar. It is equally beneficial for a poor child to learn that although he can't easily fathom Euclid's third theorem, he can clean eggs as well as a Headmaster or a PhD can. Our poultry is a mini-democracy. All workers are equal, not because we all have one vote, but because we all have only one pair of hands. Workers are often called hands. This term is an insult when used to reduce human beings to flexible working instruments. But it does express a valid insight: when we work together manually, we are reduced to hands. This is a blessing because it reminds us we are all equal. And when we realize this, how easy it is to join hands and become one.

This article began not with a fancy, but with a fact. The unity in our family of 82 is a fact of experience. This experience is not invalidated if I have expressed it badly or explained it wrongly. A man may know the delicious taste of a mango very well indeed without being able to put his experience into words. And he may be even more incapable of explaining why the taste of a mango is so pleasing to the palate. Our family unity remains a fact even if I can never find words to express it, even if I can never find reasons to explain it. But to be human means to search for explanations. And when I ask: "Why have we, who are so many and so different, become one?", I find only one answer satisfying and convincing. It isn't the full explanation. Other factors have contributed to the one-ing process, but no factor has contributed more than this. We have become one because we have done hard work together for many years.

A Poultry and a Spinning Wheel

After making this discovery, I looked for someone to confirm me in my conviction. The two men I found were the best of two worlds: one was Mahatma Gandhi, the father of the country of my adoption, the other was Pope John Paul II, my father in the faith.

It was a delight to discover that what the poultry work was doing for our poor students, Gandhiji wanted the spinning wheel to do for colonial India. Gandhiji believed that when people were spinning, they were not only spinning cloth, they were also spinning freedom. They were refusing to be so helpless and dependent that only the British textile industry could put clothes on their backs For Gandhiji the spinning wheel was a sacrament. It was both a symbol of the freedom his followers were struggling for and it effected that freedom by producing the clothes they needed to cover their nakedness and their shame. Our poultry too possesses this same liberating power. It teaches the hungry how to feed the hungry. For Gandhiji as the spinning wheel turned, it whispered in his ear again and again "Freedom! Freedom!" So — though less musically!— when our hens cluck, they are announcing not only another egg, but another tiny victory in our fight for freedom from hunger, another mini-battle won in India's war against poverty.

But for Gandhi the spinning wheel was also an instrument of democracy. He believed it would make all men equal. He dreamed of everyone, the sophisticated, the simple, the most powerful politicians, the poorest people in villages — all of them becoming for an hour a day equal and united as spinners.

In Gandhiji's time there were many 'practical' people, 'the wise and prudent', looking for sensible, efficient, political ways to achieve freedom. Because Gandhiji was the genius and the mystic and they were not, they could never understand the meaning and the function of his spinning wheel. But it was Gandhiji who was the practical man. In a land as diverse as India, with its many religious groups, its many levels of education and development, what activity could all Indians carry on that would have a meaning for them all and make them hand, heart, and mind all one? What one weapon could everyone in India wield to strike a blow for freedom? At that time Gandhiji saw it was the spinning wheel. It could be the provider, the equalizer, the unifier. Millions of spinners, working at their own spinning wheels, would all be turning the same wheel — the wheel spinning out the beautiful fabric of India's "swaraj" "Spinning becomes more and more an inner need with me. Every day I come nearer to the poorest of the poor, and in them to God."[1]

> I believe in the spinning wheel. It has two aspects, terrible and benign. In its terrible aspect it is calculated to bring about the only boycott we need for independent national existence, viz, that of the foreign cloth. It alone can kill the demoralizing British self-interest In its benign aspect it gives a new life and hope to the villager. It can fill millions of hungry mouths. It alone can bring us in touch and in tune with the villagers. It is the very best popular education that is needed for the millions.[2]

It is difficult to estimate the power of a symbol. But a man would have to be obstinate indeed to deny that if today, as during those glorious days of Gandhiji's time when he and giants like Nehru and Patel did their spinning — if today all our leaders, politicians, government officials, professors in colleges united every day with the poor and common people throughout the land in an hour of manual work, India would have a sense of unity and singleness of purpose that she sadly lacks and badly needs. But in the days of the struggle against the seemingly all-powerful British Raj, even the great leaders of India felt small and insignificant. Humility came easy. Feeling weak and helpless themselves, they could identify with the weak and helpless millions in huts and hovels all over India. Even though they could do nothing else, at least all together they could spin. But now, having entered the corridors of power, how difficult it is for the leaders of India to walk humbly before their people and their God! And what Gandhi feared has become a fact. Not only has the symbol, the spinning wheel, been abandoned, but they have also abandoned what the spinning wheel symbolized: the equality and the oneness of all the children of Mother India.

---

1. D G TENDULKAR, "*Mahatma*", *Life of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi*, Vol. II, p. 108
2. Ibid, p 137.

Men dispute the power the spinning wheel had in India's struggle for freedom. Many doubt that it exerted any meaningful influence at all. But I agree with Gandhiji. I have no doubt in my mind that we as a family here at Woodcot would not have today the unity we do have except for the liberating, equalizing, unifying influence of our poultry work together. Many times during a work period as I have struggled unsuccessfully to get binding wire to obey my ten thumbs, next to me a little David subdued the foul Goliath with an easy flash of fingers. Then I know that our work together is 'a little bit of heaven'. For during it, "the first become last and the last become first." And it's a happy thought that Gandhiji himself must have watched simple, skillful village spinners turn out better 'khadi' than the great Mahatma ever could. Is this the lesson that all men who seek equality, fraternity and liberty must learn? Only when we are all willing to take our place beside Jesus in his workshop of Nazareth, will we learn to be gentle and humble of heart and worthy of "the freedom of the sons of God".

Part 2: **The Pope Speaks**

Peter Discovers a New Key

Convinced from years of experience that work is the key to the education of the poor, I felt it was providential that in his third encyclical Pope John Paul II should focus the eyes of the Church on work as an essential element in the life and the development of man. In his encyclical *Laborem Exercens* the Pope makes a statement, simple, obvious, immensely significant and yet somehow hidden from our eyes until now:

> Human work is a key, probably the essential key, to the whole social question (n. 3)

This sentence was a lightning flash illuminating the whole horizon of my mind. Since the Kothari Report had come out in 1966,[3] I had been convinced of three points made plain in it:

> 1. If this 'change on a grand scale' (in India's social, economic situation) is to be achieved without violent revolution (and even then it would still be necessary) there is one instrument only, that can be used: EDUCATION (1.14).
>
> 2. What is needed is a revolution in education which in turn will set in motion the much desired social, economic and cultural revolution (1.17).
>
> 3. This can be done if education is related to productivity (1.19).
>
> We recommend that work-experience should be introduced as an integral part of all education—general or vocational (1.25).

The Kothari Report, along with Gandhiji's teaching on Basic Education, had helped to confirm me in my conviction that work is the catalyst needed in education to free it from the deadening ritual of examinations and transform it into a dynamic instrument to initiate, direct and accelerate the process of social change. But if the Kothari

3. *Report of the Education Commission* 1964-66, Ministry of Education, Government of India, Delhi 1966.

Report could say truly: education is the key to the social problem; and if Pope John Paul II can say, also truly: work is the key to the social problem — then one could almost say it is true twice over that work-education is the key to the social problem!

I am not about to give a commentary on this encyclical. I am only going to express my reflections on passages that have significance for the phase we are going through now at Woodcot in our evolution of an educational system for the poorest. I have said our working together has formed and fashioned us into a closely-knit family. What did I find in the encyclical Laborem Exercens that validated this fact of experience?

Key to Community

In his first sentence the Pope makes clear that work is not a selfish economic activity of man, aimed at improving only his own life. As an activity, work is not self-centred but essentially socially oriented. No man works alone. Consciously or unconsciously, he works in and with and for the community of which he is a part. By this work man improves and serves the society in which he 'lives and moves and has his being'. By its nature work makes man one with others.

> Through work man must earn his daily bread and contribute to the continual advance of science and technology and, above all, to elevating unceasingly the cultural and moral level of the society within which he lives in community with those who belong to the same family (opening paragraph).

When the Pope speaks of man the worker, he moves inevitably from man alone to man-among-men, for the work of man can only find its meaning in community and the community of man can only come to birth through work. Man and only man can be a worker. More than that, man *must* be a worker. For only by being a worker can he become truly a man. His work sets him apart from the rest of creation. He alone is an intelligent, tool-using being. He expresses himself through his work, realizes himself as a person, unique but not isolated, who to become himself must operate in a community of persons.

> Man is made to be in the visible universe an image and likeness of God himself, and he is placed in it in order to subdue the earth From the beginning therefore he is called to work Only man is capable of work, and only man works, at the same time by work occupying his existence on earth. Thus work bears a particular mark of man and of humanity, the mark of a person operating within a community of persons (ibid.).

Key to Unity

When further on I read the Pope's words:

> The Church is convinced that work is a fundamental dimension of man's existence on earth (n. 4),

I saw man's destiny telescoped into two moments of history. In Genesis we read how God gave his first command to man and the command was to work. And Christ's final command was:

> This is my commandment. love one another as I have loved you.

And his final prayer for man was:

> *Father, may they be one in us, as you are in me and I am in you.*

This was the purpose of Christ's life: to unite all men in himself so that all could be offered to the Father as one-in-the-Son. But these three, God's first command to man, Christ's last command and his final prayer for man, must be all of a oneness. In this trinity too there must be a unity. For what was work meant to be but an act of service, an act of love? Work is the actuation, the incarnation of our love for God and our fellow men. Self-sacrificing, self-giving works of love generate among men that spirit of unity Christ prayed for. By its nature, then, work must have an essential part to play in mankind's unification. If work did not have this unifying power, it is inconceivable that God would have "built" work into the nature of men whom he has created to be 'neither Greek nor Jew, neither male nor female, neither slave nor free man but all one person in Christ!'

The Pope teaches that work is a duty and a privilege shared by every human being. Just as we are all one as images of God, so we are all one as workers "subduing the earth", developing the resources of nature for the benefit of all men. This was God's plan for early man as he worked with his primitive, crude tools. It remains God's plan for modern man as he programmes his computers and soars into space. It is through work that each individual is united to the whole family of man in its efforts throughout the centuries to supply its members with what they need to live together a happy, human life.

> As man, through his work, becomes more and more the master of the earth, ... he nevertheless remains in every case and at every phase of this process within the creator's original ordering. And this ordering remains necessarily and indissolubly linked with the fact that man was created, as male and female, "in the image of God". This process is, at the same time, universal: it embrances all human beings, every generation, every phase of economic and cultural development, and at the same time it is a process that takes place within each human being, in each conscious human subject. Each and every individual is at the same time embraced by it. Each and every individual, to the proper extent and in an incalculable number of ways, takes part in the giant process whereby man "subdues the earth" through his work (n 4).

Key to Equality

When I came to the Pope's thoughts on the relationship between work and man's equality, I was in for a shock. While thinking of how our work at Woodcot had blessed us with a sense of equality, I had forgotten that for most labourers the rich and powerful have turned the blessing of work into a curse. They use work itself to degrade the world's workers, to turn them into slaves, without dignity, without hope, without freedom. I had made a stupid blunder. I had put the cart before the horse, the work before the worker. Reflecting only on our experience with work, I was thinking of what work does to the worker, not what the worker does to work. And what the worker does to work is this: he gives work its dignity. That stands the world on its head. For the world believes the opposite: the work a man

does determines his place in the human hierarchy. The dirtier the work, the more despised the worker. The more he sweats, the lower he gets. But by becoming the carpenter of Nazareth, Christ taught that a man is not a better man, nor more of a person because he is a doctor and not a ditch-digger, a college professor and not a coolie. All work has equal dignity because the worker doing it is not a machine, not an animal, not a slave, but a human person, who as the image of God, Father and Creator, co-creates with him as a son, consciously and freely choosing to work, to dedicate his time and talents, to give his energy and life to making the world a better home for the family of man.

> By broadening certain aspects that already belong to the Old Testament, Christianity brought about a fundamental change of ideas in this field (of work), taking the whole content of the Gospel message as its point of departure, especially the fact that the one who, while being God, became like us in all things, devoted most of the years of his life on earth to manual work at the carpenter's bench. This circumstance constitutes in itself the most eloquent "Gospel of work" showing that the basis for determining the value of human work is not primarily the kind of work being done but the fact that the one who is doing it is a person. The sources of the dignity of work are to be sought primarily in the subjective dimension, not in the objective one Such a concept practically does away with the very basis of the ancient differentiation of people into classes according to the kind of work done (n 6).

Now, as we work together at Woodcot, I find these two truths about work not contradictory, but complementary. In a real way, work does equalize all workers. But in a far more profound sense, workers equalize all work. When there are a thousand eggs to be picked up, the work makes myself and Bhoochong, a poor boy in Class 5, exactly equal. But when I can carry twice as big a bucket as he can, I remember that our work is still equal because little Bhoochong is also "a man".

Key to Solidarity

But during the Industrial Revolution work was not evaluated according to the dignity of the worker performing it. Quite the contrary. The demands of the work reduced man to a cog in the machinery of production. The massive manufacturing process did not treat workers as persons, but as "one factor among the many factors of production". But when the early industrialists gathered into factories hundreds of men and women, and put them to work together, the masters did not realize that this new co-operative work would give their slaves a new co-operative mentality It would change them from a mob of weak individuals into a community united by a bond as strong and as hard as steel. When Marx summoned the proletariat with the cry: "Workers of the world, unite!", he was not so much urging them to become one as making them aware that they were one — one tightly-knit band of human beings who by their united efforts were producing wealth for others while being robbed of it themselves. When the fruit of their common labour was being taken away from the workers because they had no political or economic

power, they discovered within themselves a new power generated by their work itself: the power of their union. Ironically it was the oppression of their masters that made workers conscious of the awesome strength of their own solidarity.

> This question (the worker question) and the problems connected with it gave rise to a just social reaction and caused the impetuous emergence of a great burst of solidarity between workers, first and foremost industrial workers. The call to solidarity and common action addressed to the workers — especially to those engaged in narrowly specialized, monotonous and depersonalized work in industrial plants, where the machine tends to dominate man — was important and eloquent from the point of view of social ethics. It was the reaction against the degradation of man as the subject of work, and against the unheard of accompanying eploitation in the field of wages, working conditions and social security for the worker. This reaction united the working world in a community marked by great solidarity (n. 8).

But like all things human, the solidarity of the proletariat needs to be transformed by the grace of Christ. The word "solidarity" implies something hard, inhuman, unyielding. But the solidarity of workers was not meant to be a solid battering ram used only to knock down and destroy. It was meant to infuse into workers a new corporate life, to be "a unity in the work of service, building up the body of Christ".

> So have the sourage to bear witness to the twofold dimension of your existence as workers and as Christians. Contribute to enriching every form of solidarity with the spirit of Christian communion.[4]

But work unites man to others not only because it reveals the power in human companionship, but much more because it reveals to man the meaning of himself. Work teaches that 'it is not good for man to be alone'. All men were made and meant to be community men, men-for-others. So work is the way man becomes himself, a person created to love and serve others and in this love and service to discover and develop himself. A man's work is an expression of what he is,

> ... myself it speaks and spells,
> Crying *What I do is me*: for that I came [5]

Work expresses a person's dexterity, intelligence, imagination, originality, perseverance. Most of all it expresses what is most intimately himself: it expresses his love. Work is his self-revealing, his self-sharing, his self-giving. In work man loses his life to find it.

> Work is a good thing for man — a good thing for his humanity — because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes "more a human being" (n. 9).

---

4. Address to Workers on the 90th Anniversary of *Rerum Novarum* (15-5-1981), in *L'Osservatore Romano*, 25th May 1981, p. 2, n. 7.
5. Gerard Manley Hopkins, Poem "The Kingfisher".

Key to Family Life

Before experiencing the effects of working in a community, I had underrated the influence of work on our lives in two ways. First, I had not realized that work does not merely support a man. It develops him. Secondly, even less had I realized that work is essential for family life not only because it supplies a family's needs, but much more because it forms a family into a family. Work is not merely the means by which a family makes a living. It is especially the means by which a family makes a life that is truly a family life. Today, in the Western world, families are disintegrating at a frightening rate. This is one of the causes. In an industrialized world, less and less can the members of nuclear families participate in work as a common activity that supports and develops the family, that both reveals the meaning and realizes the purpose of their life together. Without work man cannot be a man, much less a family man.

> Having thus confirmed the personal dimension of human work, we must go on to the second sphere of values which is necessarily linked to work. Work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life, which is a natural right and something that man is called to (n. 10)

It was a relief and a re-assurance to hear the Pope state as a general truth what I had experienced as a particular fact. For the Pope makes it clear that when he says, "work constitutes a foundation for the formation of family life", he is not simply saying in fuzzy philosophical terms: "You need money to make a home!" In speaking of man's personal development, he rejected work as merely an economic activity. It wasn't only man's way of making a living, it was man's way of making himself! In the development of a family — which depends on the simultaneous growth of many persons joined together like the branches of a vine — work has an even more important function to perform. It must not only develop the life of each individual in the family, it must also unify those lives so that all share in the larger family life and each one grows yet more in and through this sharing. That is why the Pope insists that work must not be an activity extrinsic to family life. Work will not fulfil its function in the formation of a family if it provides only the material goods needed for a family to survive. Work must become an integral, organic part of family life itself so that man can be himself, can be what he was created to be, not only the image of a God who is one, but the image of a God who is also three-in-one.

> These two spheres of values — one linked to work and the other consequent on the family nature of human life — must be properly united and must properly permeate each other (ibid.).

Key to the Family School

But what excited me most of all was yet to come. While trying to educate the poorest, I made a startling discovery. I discovered that properly organized work (or should I say pedagogically organized work?) is a far better method of education, a far better way of teaching children not only how to think, but how to do, and most of all how

to be human, that the sterile process of "taking notes", "memorizing facts", "passing exams" that goes on in "the system".

For work-education is life-education. Instead of children being imprisoned, impassive and immobile in desks, in the poultry they were vibrantly alive — all their senses in action and their minds active and alert, to observe, judge, decide, do. They *had* to be alive because suddenly their text-books had come to life! Learning suddenly took on some of the fascination of fairy land. Not many children are lucky enough to have text-books that squawk, lay eggs that have to be counted, eat feed that has to be weighed, catch diseases that have to be cured. Maths became the magic wand changing white eggs into golden eggs. Careful calculations, averages, percentages, graphs were the abracadabra that turned perspiration into profit. Science was at work everywhere. Hygiene, nutrition, anti-biotics, vaccinations, disinfectants, temperatures, humidity, electricity were not terms burdening the memory, but factors influencing production for better or for worse. Budding "vets" dissected hundreds of birds to determine the cause of death and to marvel at the complicated, egg-producing "machinery" inside every bird. Older boys had to become leaders and managers to organize the two hundred student-workers engaged in a fast-moving, complex operation. And there is nothing like working together to teach children the "evil" in laziness, stealing, quarrelling, bullying, shirking. No one values more than a worker does companions who are industrious, co-operative, understanding and forgiving. Moral Science usually means dull lectures about vague, abstract principles. During work, principles come to life. But work in the poultry didn't eliminate the need of the classroom. Rather "academic" learning acquired new purpose and relevance when related to scientific food production, account keeping, consumption, marketing, management. The work improved the learning process and the learning process improved the work. *This was the key idea in Gandhiji's philosophy of education.* In this, as in many things, he was a prophet. But who listens to prophets?

Even after I became convinced that work should be an integral part of education, especially for the poor, I did not realize that only *work can teach us how to build a community, only work can educate* us in family living. For learning how to live together is not a course to be 'covered' and completed. It is not fixed and it is never finished. It evolves out of the events of every day. As life, to *be* life, must go on, so our learning how to live together must go continually on. In this process at Woodcot we discovered that work is the best pedagogue. During our family work periods every day we learn better how to love, respect and share with each other; we learn how much we need others and how much others need us. Once again a fact of our experience was corroborated by the teaching of the Pope.

> Work and industriousness also influence the whole process of education in the family, for the very reason that every one "becomes a human being" through, among other things, work, and becoming a human being is precisely the main purpose of the whole process of education. Obviously, two aspects of work in a sense come into play here: the one making family life and its upkeep

possible, and the other making possible the achievement of the purposes of the family, especially education. Nevertheless, these two aspects of work are linked to one another and are mutually complementary in various points (ibid.).

In my effort to evolve an integrated educational system to liberate the poor, I had discovered that work-education is essential, but it is not enough. To survive after school and to enjoy a decent standard of living, poor students must learn how to live and work together in an extended family. This practical need had made me graft together into one living organism: work, education, family life; all three influencing and being influenced by each other. In his encyclical the Pope links together these same three elements. Once again he verified my experience and confirmed my conviction.

> The family is simultaneously a community made possible by work and the first school of work, within the home, for every person (ibid.).

These words define what our Woodcot community is: a family in which the activities of working, learning, and living together make up one integrated process.

Key to the Building of a Nation

But just as man doesn't live his life alone, so families don't exist in isolation, but within a nation. Our work together doesn't only make us better members in a more united family. It also makes us better citizens of the state, more sincere, loyal and loving children of Mother India. After all as food-producers we are engaged in the work that is essential to India and the life of her people, the work without which she can neither progress nor even survive. Nothing increases love more than loving. This is especially true of patriotic love. If it is not continually embodied in deeds, no love becomes more quickly and completely a matter of windy words than love of country. Every day our food-producing work transforms our love for India from a feeling into a fact, from words into deeds. It is the expression of our love for the millions upon millions who are hungry in villages and city slums in every corner of our vast land. Every day our work identifies us with India's countless workers sweating in fields, in factories, in offices, on roads and construction sites. Naturally, then, the words of the Pope about the function of work in the life of a nation strike a responsive chord in our minds and hearts.

> The third sphere of values that emerges from this point of view — that of the subject of work — concerns the great society to which man belongs on the basis of particular cultural and historical links. This society ... is also a great historical and social incarnation of the work of all generations. All of this brings it about that man combines his deepest human identity with membership of a nation, and intends his work also to increase the common good developed together with his compatriots, thus realizing that in this way work serves to add to the heritage of the whole human family, of all the people living in the world (ibid.).

Epilogue

The Spirit at Work

So the mystery of our family unity has been revealed. Our work has made us one. It supports us physically, challenges us intellectually, but most of all it develops us humanly and spiritually — both as individuals and as members of a family. It has been for us truly a school of the Spirit, where every day we learn together to prepare our hearts for his gifts: "Love, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, trustfulness, gentleness and self-control." For no group of workers can work together day after day in harmony and happiness without these gifts; just as without them no family can develop a genuine family life. Each morning at 5.30 when we begin together our work as a family — this 'little flock' out of India's millions of poor who are like sheep without a shepherd — as I look at my brothers and sisters, all of them rescued from slums and saved from a life of hunger and unhope, I often pray a snatch of the Psalms that says it all:

> Fill us at daybreak with your kindness,
> Make us glad, for the days when you afflicted us,
> Let your work be seen by your servants,
>
> And may the gracious care of the Lord our God be ours:
> Prosper the work of our hands for us,
> Prosper the work of our hands (Ps 89 [90], 14-17).

"It Isn't So"

This being said, two things must be added by way of caution. The marvellous and the miraculous are seldom accepted or rejected on their merits. They are simply dismissed with "It can't be so!" No one is quite so blind as "the man who *will* not see". This blindness is often accompanied by a colossal arrogance. Would anyone who has never studied Sanskrit be so arrogant as to pick out some "shloka" from the Upanishads and expound its precise meaning? But in social matters everyone thinks himself an expert. People who have never studied the poor, who have never experienced or reflected upon their life or their problems, who have never listened to their tales of misery, their sorrows, their fears and their hopes, who have never loved them—not that faceless abstraction 'the poor'— but who have never loved, as mother loves child, a poor Moti, a poor Shanker, a poor Asha, these very people after a half hour's superficial observation, will not hesitate to pass a final, infallible judgement on the value of any effort to help the poor. The days of the five blind men and the elephant are not over! There is no way to deal with a blind man who thinks he sees. But one can learn patience from an anecdote which is also a parable. After a glance at one of Turner's landscape master-pieces, a supercilious English lady turned to the artist and said: "But I never see colours like that in a sunset!" To which Turner answered: "Ah, madam, but don't you wish you could!"

"It Won't Last"

The second cautionary comment is this. For every one person who says: "It isn't so!", there are ten who say: "Maybe it's so now,

but it won't last!" While I was writing this article, a religious friend, whom I hadn't seen for years, hardly got out his hello!, before adding: "I hear what you're doing at Woodcot. Great! But remember, after you go, it won't work!" I felt like answering: "What do you mean it won't work? Work works!" But that would have been to mystify him beyond measure and beyond mercy. This negative reaction, inflicted so often on those who work for the poor, I resignedly accept as a defence mechanism. Christians — if they are going to remain self-respecting Christians — *have* to say about projects for the poor: "It doesn't work!", or, "It won't last!", because if they admit to themselves that perhaps there is a way to help the helpless poor, they might have to try it themselves and this is just not the Way they want to go to find the Truth and the Life. I don't blame them. Nobody is supposed to *like* the Way of the Cross.

But what must be said about this "It won't last" comment is that it completely misses the point. It's not my duty to feed the hungry and help the poor in some never-never tomorrow. It's my duty to love them today. Remember? "Do not worry about tomorrow: tomorrow will take care of itself. Each day has enough troubles of its own." Anyone struggling to 'preach the gospel to the poor' knows well — oh, so well!— all about the enough, and the more than enough, of each day's troubles!

Document

Searching for an Indian Ecclesiology

STATEMENT OF THE INDIAN THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

(*Nagpur, October* 21st-23rd, 1983)

1. *The Context of our Reflection*

An awakening has been taking place in the Indian Church regarding its special Christian responsibility towards the entire country, in the re-enacting of the message of the gospel. This is particularly felt in the context of the growing contradictions in the post-Indepence life of our nation and the burning problems of the common people: poverty, hunger, economical and political exploitation and social inequality. In response to this situation there is a growing awareness in the Church of the need for a deeper involvement in all aspects of the life of the people, and consequently of new approaches to the reality of faith and ecclesial self-understanding. We cannot, however, say that this new involvement and these new approaches are welcomed and fully accepted by every section of the Church.

We are reminded of certain recent episodes like the experience of Fr Thomas Kocherry at Trivandrum, Fr Pradeep Prabhu (Peter de Mello) at Talassari, Fr Jacob of Belgaum in the state of Karnataka and Fr Abraham Kootholil at Alwaye — all these look like question marks to this emergent ecclesial sense. Without claiming to know all the concrete circumstances and particulars nor making any judgment about the merits of the individual cases, we have to say that the procedure followed when dealing with such cases must take account of the individual's personal dignity and his inalienable rights and must be subject to the due processes of justice. People generally have a right to be informed about decisions taken in such public causes which have a bearing on their life. Equally important is the need for information to be made available on the importance and degree of our involvement in the burning issues of the day, including peoples' movements for justice and liberation from oppressive structures and restrictive regulations. This calls for a critical examination of the role of the Church in our country, her internal organization, the processes of decision-making and its task of evangelization against the background of the ecclesial presence in our nation.

2. *The Responsibility of Theologians*

We, the members of the Indian Theological Association, gathered for the 7th Annual Meeting, at Nagpur, the geographical centre of India, from October 21st to 23rd, 1983, are deeply concerned about these issues. As theologians we consider it our task to render to the

Church in India a service of discernment and interpretation. We have come together to search for an authentic ecclesiology for India and we know that we are only setting the first steps on this difficult but adventurous road. We are conscious that this ecclesiology will only take proper shape from constant dialogue with adherents of secular movements, believers of other religions and disciples of Christ: lay, religious and Church leaders. From this firm belief in the power of dialogue we share with you our findings and recommendations.

3. *Failure of Theology and Theologians to Face Reality*

A great responsibility for the modern situation should be attributed to our own failure as theologians, to make our faith reflection respond to the actualities of the Indian context. Stereotype formulas and clichés are often used to escape the responsibility to face up to facts and to confront the powers that be. The practice of servile conformity to traditional interpretations, frequently outdated and unrelated to our times and sometimes prompted by the fear of incurring the displeasure of the Church establishment with the danger of losing our position and privileges, is less than edifying. Silence, worse still agreement, when the more courageous course should have been honest disagreement, perpetuates injustice and promotes authoritarian practices.

4. *A Radically New Situation*

In the recent past the community of Jesus' disciples has been confronted with a situation, so radically different from anything it experienced before, that a mere adaptation or reform of traditional ecclesiology is likely to prove ineffective. Nothing less than a radical transformation is necessary. Our service to the people and our loyalty to Jesus Christ obliges us to reflect and theologise courageously The present-day 'crisis' which we recognize, has some of the ingredients of the struggle of the infant Church, predominantly Jewish, even Judaistic, when it discovered that the Spirit was also at work among the Gentiles. Were they expected to become Jews in order to become Jesus' disciples? Should Indians become Romans or Syrians in dress, customs, government, worship and thought, in order to become Jesus' disciples? How far should the Church's past, however rich and multicoloured, determine its present and its future? To what extent should the past, if at all, serve as a paradigm for the future? Does the early Church and do its early traditions carry too much weight in our theological reflections in India? Do we have to look — while being guided and inspired by the past — beyond earlier solutions to meet the radically new situation in India and in the world at large?

I. Some Causes for the Present Impasse

A. *The Complex Situation*

5. *Dichotomy between People and Hierarchy*

Among the major causes for the present malaise in the Church is the fact that people as a whole have not fully experienced the demands

of God's call to work for his kingdom and to respond to the responsibilities that flow from his grace. People usually identify the Church with the hierarchy and its institutions, which tend to monopolize all initiative and responsibility in the Church. Liturgical celebrations are still dominated by bishops and priests. Even the finances and various aspects of administration are mostly controlled by them. Women, to a greater extent than men, are denied a significantly active role in the life of the Church. This reduces the role of the laity as a whole to one of passivity and total dependence. A living *organism* creates institutions only as a means for attaining its goals and produces enduring expressions of service in the form of organizations; the Church in India, on the other hand, appears as an *organization* planted on the Indian soil from the outside, over-burdened with institutions, often exclusively serving those in power; its source of originality, creativity and life itself is located far away, controlled by invisible hands. To give a single example, even for translations of liturgical texts in the vernacular, a local Church has to depend upon the approval of Rome. This is done inspite of the fact that texts are prepared by competent people of the local Church: verification of the fidelity of the translations is done by Rome who depends in turn on translations into European languages.

6. *Lack of Liberating Leadership*

Tied to the past by its tradition, the Church often fails to read the signs of the times. Thus it fails to give effective and timely leadership to the people to respond to emerging issues in the light of faith. And though the autonomy of the sciences is recognized in principle, the ecclesiastical authorities do not seem to encourage or provide scope for professional people to make their appropriate contribution. A pertinent question may be raised here: how many competent professionals make their effective contribution to the CBCI Commissions that cover mostly secular areas like labour, family, mass media, peace and social justice? Instead of being encouraged to think, to feel and act as adults in the Church, people are often reduced to the status of children, by their being denied participation in decision-making. This failure to provide creative leadership and liberate people from infantile dependence upon the Church causes a feeling of alienation from the Church itself.

7. *Compartments and Labels*

There is a rigid practice of fixing labels to groups, sections and officers within the Indian ecclesial community in terms of rights and privileges, claims and titles. This happens not only on the vertical plane of higher and lower echelons, but also on the horizontal level of groups, classes, regions and traditions, with often a lack of dialogue and communication among them. Thus there are invisible walls among different sections and classes within the Church: bishops, piests, religious and laity, men and women, Latins and Syrians, and the like. People are set against one another in the scandalous name of nobility of origin, caste, position and possessions. This anomaly is a betrayal of the very reality of the People of God who are all equally children of the same Father.

8. *Imposition of Particular Ecclesiologies*

Among the main reasons for rigidity in attitudes and approaches in Church relations, and the lack of awareness of the needs and concerns of the people at large, are particular ecclesiologies formed and conditioned by particular socio-cultural situations and fortified and reinforced by vested interests. Thus the Roman political and legal system to a great extent dictated the Roman ecclesiology, and in Palestine the Palestinian background defined the structures of the Church. Often the particular self-understanding of the Church, created by local conditions, is simply taken for granted and not critically examined. In the light of the Gospel the relativity of all structures becomes clear and what emerges is the primacy of the communication of life, freedom and salvation to all. Hence all ecclesiologies are relative. This is particularly significant for our Indian situation where ecclesiologies were to a great extent borrowed from abroad. The time has come for us to develop our own ecclesial self-understanding.

9. *Lack of Awareness of the Role of World Religions*

There is a general ignorance of the early origins of the Church which received a great deal from other religions, particularly Judaism and the Graeco-Roman traditions. It was open to all values that were good and healthy in various peoples and cultures. It is paradoxical that in India which is a land of religions, we Christians remain often unaware of, and insensitive to, the modern movements in these religions and our common cultural heritage with them; these influences have salutary lessons for our own total renewal. Turning our back on their rich religious heritage is closing our eyes and ears to God, who discloses himself to us through them; this narrows our own concept of divine revelation. The contradictions in our ambiguous attitude to other religions are quite obvious. We are told that the non-Biblical scriptures contain much that is noble and good and yet we are not allowed to read them publicly in the liturgy. The Church willingly took over and perpetuated the structures and titles of Imperial Rome and medieval feudalism, but it is unwilling to appreciate and incarnate the living communitarian leadership of Hinduism and other humanitarian religions. The Indian religious tradition assigns priority to spiritual values; we, on the other hand, often extol structures and organizations, dogmas and laws.

B. *Stifling Structures*

10. *Worldliness in the Church: Failure of Mission to the World*

A great part of the responsibility for our problems should be placed on those in authority who guide the destinies of the ecclesial community. In overemphasizing the institutional reality of the Church, they have often endeavoured to bolster it through the power of material resources, and in their indecent quest for security, they have given the impression of a worldliness that seems to compete with multinational corporations. This puts the credibility of the Church at a grave dis-

advantage and contrasts starkly with its avowed mission to transform the world into God's kingdom.

In spite of their manifest profession to a radical living of the Gospel, the religious would seem to have yielded to the temptations of the secular world and its values by not siding more visibly with the poor. Serving those in power, concentrating on profit-making and quality-education, and thus catering mainly to the higher classes, have made us the instruments that promote the values of the dominant classes to the detriment of the poor, who, among other things, need primary education.

11. *Authority as Power*

In this worldly orientation, the Church authority often uses its power to acquire further worldly goods, to ensure our status and to enhance our prestige and privileges. Thus people are manipulated for our own advantage. This naturally leads to a power struggle among the various sections of the community, accentuating further the sense of alienation already felt by the powerless sections in the Church.

12. *Uniformity Mistaken for Unity*

In this distortion of authority, with its dependence on mere external power, there is a great temptation to replace the inner unifying force of the "Word" and the inspiring activity of the Holy Spirit, with a semblance of pseudo-unity created through uniformity imposed from the outside. This imposed — as opposed to natural — unity crushes originality and creativity; it stifles initiative for active participation from the members, vital to a living Church. For example, the liturgy, which ought to be the celebration of the mystery of Christ through cultural forms of the people, is completely controlled from the outside in the name of unity, which in reality is only superficial uniformity.

13. *Proclamation of Freedom — Institutional Control*

There is a certain ambiguity and some duplicity even in the life of the Church. It proclaims freedom for all; yet it imposes arbitrary control at all levels of ministry and decision-making. This is done on grounds totally unrelated to the Gospel, largely for safe-guarding vested interests, rights and privileges. For example, persons are ostracized even for apparently innovative ideas; those in authority often pass judgment on germinal ideas without proper dialogue with those concerned and without consulting other experts.

14. *Present Ecclesiology, a Hindrance to Authentic Evangelization*

There is no doubt that the present set-up of ecclesiastical authority, which puts a premium on the maintenance of the status quo, is greatly unsuited to the effective proclamation of the Word of God and the evangelization of peoples. The Gospel creates a movement that passes from people to people. The moment this movement is reified into an establishment, primarily concerned with its own maintenance and

security, the dynamism of evangelization, which calls us to follow the free movement of the Spirit of God, is curtailed.

15. Ideological Baggage

The transforming force of the Gospel is being weakened by *interpretations of the Gospel favouring the status quo. The Hierarchy, in exercise of its magisterial function, is often conditioned by a narrowly* understood interpretation of Christian tradition. For example, involvement in the struggle of the peoples is branded as political action, incompatible with the sacred image and role of the priest. Over and beyond preserving the purity of faith and its vigour, the magisterium becomes the custodian of ideologies and formulations that limit, and sometimes even distort, the reality of faith.

C. The Resulting Situation in the Church

16. *Curtailment of Charisms by Law*

The Church should be a community guided by the Spirit of God through the charisms that contribute to the service of the people. When the guidance of the Holy Spirit is ignored and his gifts are controlled for the sake of external convenience and the upholding of the status quo, the Church is impoverished and its vitality stifled. Often opportunism becomes the guiding rule of the People of God, and not the stirrings of the Spirit.

17. *Burden of the Past*

Offering the past as a paradigm for the future easily prevents people from creatively responding to the challenges that shape their destiny The past, however, has to make its contribution, but should not become a dead weight on the life and activity of the Church.

18. *Narrow Understanding of Catholicity*

When the catholicity of the Church is interpreted as the right to conquer and expand in space, little room is left to recognize and accept the manifold richness of the Spirit working among the peoples and in their history. True catholicity would consist in embracing all that is good and noble in human life as an expression and manifestation of the universality of God's plan and his Spirit. The Church, however, is still far away from this true catholicity, preoccupied as it is with its inherited identity.

II. Towards a Solution of the Problem

19 *Methodology*

Reflection on *the methodology* for resolving the problems of the Church today, we arrived at the following elements that should be operative in a new ecclesiology:

(1) *Faith experience*: The experience of the risen Lord and his Spirit forms the core of the Christian faith. A similar saving experience of the Spirit is also to be recognized in people of other faiths.

20. (2) *The Human Reality*: The liberating and recreating power of the risen Lord impels us to the restructuring and reshaping of the fragmented humanity that characterizes our Indian situation, wherein the Kingdom has to become a reality. The Church for her part has to exercise her prophetic role "to uproot and to pull down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer 1: 10).

21 (3) *The People of God*: The community of the disciples gathered by and in the risen Lord is the Church; where there is no difference between Greek and Jew, master and slave, male and female, as all are one in the Lord. Hence the rights and responsibilities of all people, in contributing to the building up of the new human community, should be emphasized both within and without. The right place of the laity, and women in particular, should be recognized. This will take place, when the minister recognizes in praxis that his primary role is service of the people.

22. (4) *Participation* (i) *Within*: Participation in decision-making becomes a corporate responsibility. Those in power in the present situation have to recognize it and accept the collegial bodies, from synod to parish council and other agencies, not as merely consultative, but as channels of participation in decision-making. Women should be members of all these bodies.

(ii) *Without*: Christians as members of a wider community should participate and collaborate with it in the urgent task of building up a just and human social order and discover in this concrete context the implications of their faith.

23 (5) *Ministers*: Such an understanding of the full community calls for a reconsideration of the present ministerial structure: participation in the selection of candidates for the ministry, accountability to the people regarding the exercise and duration of ministries.

24. (6) The prophetic ministry of the Indian Church calls for an *appropriate formation* of religious and clergy Normally certain virtues (obedience, conformity, submission, patience in suffering, etc) are recognized as virtues becoming a good seminarian or religious. Certain other virtues (protest, resistance, critical stand, spirit of questioning, discernment, etc.) are looked down upon as unbecoming a good religious or seminarian. Both groups of virtues have sanctions and rewards. There seems to be a trend for the ideological domestication of our trainees to be subservient. While not denying the first group of values, we feel that the manifold challenges of the Church in India today call for a special emphasis on the second group of values. We are particularly happy that in different parts of the country individuals and groups are emerging who are no longer afraid to take a prophetic stand on the burning social issues of today.

25. The Identity of the Indian Church

It has to be conceived as the mystery incarnate in the particular conditions of the local community, gathered around the celebration of the Eucharist. It is also found in the dynamism of the believing group which not only prays together and suffers together, but also fights together against evils of all kinds. A Church that identifies itself with the joys and sorrows, struggles and endeavours of a human community, is liable to become conscious of the condition of being dominated. When it begins to say 'no' to what impedes its liberation, a genuinely dynamic Church is born. The Qahal (covenant community) of the Old Testament came into existence when the slaves in Egypt started their struggle for freedom under the leadership of Yahweh. Involvement in people's struggles will help the Church to realize its identity more authentically and transform its own structures in a healthy renewal of itself.

26. Worship in Action

Participation in peoples' action for their liberation, with firm belief in God's presence in their midst and trust in his assistance, is also an integral dimension of the liturgy. Worship is, therefore, celebrated not only in rituals and sacraments, but also in the day-to-day work and struggles to attain fulness and to transform the human community into the household of God. In this perspective baptism becomes the commitment to a God who commits himself to his people and their struggle, and Eucharist becomes a celebration of this struggle and their victory (Is 1.11-17; Amos 5:21-24).

27. The Church as Communion

The true identity of the Church is to be the leaven in the mass. If Hinduism and other religions have survived without structures of authority, it is an indication that the Church in India could fulfil its mission with the minimum of structures. It is a communion of persons and a communion of local visible communities following Jesus the liberator.

28. Contemplation and Action of the Spirit

In conformity with the manifold Christian and Indian traditions the basis of the community is the Spirit of the Risen Lord. Contemplation and renunciation make the transforming power of the Spirit operative in the life and mission of the Church. Over-reliance on material wealth, especially flowing from centres of power and influence, closes any person or community to the working of the Spirit. The Church in India can ill-afford to ignore the preference of the Spirit who raises up the *anavim* of all ages and cultures.

29. Scripture, Tradition and the Church

The life of the believing community is nourished and strengthened by its Scriptures and living traditions. Their interpretation today

has to be articulated through the constant reference, not only to past traditions, but also to the twofold contemporary realities, viz., the Spirit manifesting himself through the events of the times and the riches of the living religious traditions.

30. *Church and Evangelization*

Those who have a deep personal encounter with the risen Lord cannot but share this experience with others. The Lord invites us to work with them for the effective establishment of the Kingdom. This implies participation in the struggle of the people, who are oppressed and marginalized.

31. *Church in Dialogue with other Religions*

In this land of religions the Church can fulfil its mission only in dialogue with Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and other religions. It has to learn from the religious past of India its integral humanism which always expressed a strong faith in Man and his inborn sense of freedom, that enabled him to struggle against heavy odds even the law of karma. India always tried to integrate into a single perspective the human goals of wealth, pleasure, righteousness and liberation. This holistic approach that transcended the dichotomies between the secular and the sacred, spirit and matter, concerns of this world and of the next, urges the Church to overcome her tendency to polarize. Recognizing the religions as integral to the one divine economy of human salvation, the Church has to formulate its faith in openness to the concerns and aspirations of other religions for humanity, rather than in opposition to them. To be truly catholic the Church should acknowledge the insights of other religions as dimensions of its own faith. This positive encounter with other religions can help the Church modify its own traditional self-understanding.

32. ***Conclusion***

Our reflections have made us aware that the Church in India is facing today one of the most critical moments of the twenty centuries of its history. We humbly acknowledge that the solutions we have before us are far from being adequate to meet the enormous problems we are facing. The reflections prescribed here are only hesitant beginnings in our search for an Indian ecclesiology.

The traditional structures and institutions, that gave the Church a certain stability and strength in the past, have become today its problems. Since its structures are not absolute but relative to its mission, we must have the courage to discard those clearly irrelevant and even harmful, and look for those contextual and functional.

The ecclesiological concepts and traditions that provided a certain universal uniformity to the Church in the past, are seen today to be socio-culturally conditioned by the times and places in which they were formed. This situation demands that without denying our past heritage we work towards a truly Indian ecclesiology emerging from the ethos and struggles of our people.

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

*In a recent article entitled "Praying the Psalms" (*VIDYAJYOTI*, November 1983), Fr C M Cherian claims that if we were to ask Jesus to teach us to pray, he would say "Go to my school of the Psalms where I am always teaching you how to pray." I am not really sure that there are adequate scriptural and theological reasons to make such a claim*

The disciples of Jesus who asked him to teach them to pray were all Jews, and so I guess they were quite familiar with the Psalms for many years, if not already from their childhood They were at home in the cultural background of the Psalms They shared the theological vision, ethical perspectives, and cultural concern of the Psalmist Yet, they still had to learn to pray!

I, and many others like me in this land, will be very unconfortable in a tribal semitic culture My theological vision is different God is Abba, *the loving Father of all*, and not a vindictive tribal god The Gospel of Jesus makes greater ethical demands of me I have to forgive my enemies, I have to pray for those who curse me. I am ill at ease with a cultic understanding of the liturgy Hence I am not really sure that were *I* to ask Jesus to teach me to pray, he would say to me "Go to the Psalms . "

I think that this question of the place of the Psalms in Christian prayer needs a theological re-evaluation I know the Psalms help many to pray But I also know many priests, religious and seminarians who find it very hard to pray the Psalms. In any re-evaluation of our practice I think we have a safe norm in *In essentialibus unitas, in ceteris libertas, in omnibus caritas* This norm finds support in the teaching of St Paul "For freedom Christ has set you free, stand fast therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery" (Gal 5, 1) If there is any area of Christian life where freedom is most called for it is the sphere of prayer

St Joseph's Seminary,
Allahabad 211001

Subhash ANAND

Book Reviews

Covenant in the Bible

Declaration and Covenant. By Paul KALLUVEETTIL, C.M.I. *Rome, Biblical Institute Press*, 1982. (Analecta Biblica, 88) Pp xii-284 L 23.000

This is a revised version of a doctoral dissertation, entitled 'Declaration Formulae in the OT Secular Covenants', presented at the Biblical Institute, Rome, in 1980 The subtitle of the book, 'Comprehensive Review of Covenant Formulae from the Old Testament and the Ancient Near East', specifies the subject, the limits and the method of the study The biblical notion of covenant is still much disputed "This book seeks to contribute to the debate and perhaps solve some problems by collecting as much as possible of the material, biblical and extra-biblical, about one form of covenant making and then clarifying the meaning of that form Perhaps the material and the discussion will open paths for better understanding of that polyvalent topic, covenant". (p v)

We are familiar with the expression "I will be your God and you will be my people", signifying the mutual covenant relationship between Yahweh and Israel A comprehensive study of the subject implies an investigation on 1. whether this declaration (i e, a formal statement with some solemnity) of fellowship is exclusive to the OT religious covenant, or whether OT texts which describe covenant making between two human parties attests the existence of an analogous declaration of fellowship, 2 the relationship of declaration formulas to covenant enacting rites (swearing, giving gifts, eating together, offering sacrifices); 3 whether the biblical formula is found also outside the Bible, in the Ancient Orient The present study deals with the declaration formulae both in OT secular covenants (of the Hebrew canon only) and in extra-biblical documents. Passages analysed are not only those mentioning the word 'covenant', but all episodes referring to agreements. Before starting the study the author defines his vocabulary in a clear, precise manner. The book consists of three parts.

Part I studeis secular covenants in the OT, under two sections : 1 *berith texts (formulae including the mention of berith*=covenant), either descriptive (v.g. Abimelech-Abraham, David-Jonathan, ect) or allusive, 2 non-berith texts (i e., passages where the word berith does not occur) phrases descriptive of covenant making acts, phrases for stipulation, phrases denoting union The notion of covenant covers a whole complex of ideas which can differ widely in different contexts It may imply a variety of agreements, even between people with kinship ties, it may be concerned with political affairs as well as personal relationship, it may stipulate specified obligations or not The OT does not have any fixed declaration form Biblical instances, analysed here, are. 1 political covenants. between David and Hiram (1 Kgs 5,26), Solomon and the Queen of Sheba (1 Kgs 10, 1-10 13), Abraham and his allies (Gen 14, 17-21), 2 social covenants: the Rahab Covenant (Jos 2); Jacob and Esau (Gen 32-33), the Kenite Pact between Jethro and the Israelites (1 Sam 15, 6 and Exod 18, 12), the Covenant fellowship of Tobias and the nobles of Judah (Neh 6, 17-19)

Part II gives some types of non-biblical covenant declaration formulas, v g., 'we all one', 'vassal-Lord', 'son-father', 'brother', 'friend/ally'. Many examples of the covenant declaration form 'vassal-lord', have parallels in the OT These are analysed in part III.

Part III forms the core of the study Instances of the covenant declaration formula 'vassal' are: Jos 9, 8 (between Israel and the Gibeonites), 2 Kgs 16,7 (Ahaz besieged by the kings of Aram and Israel, appealing to Tiglath-pileser for help), 2 Kgs 10,5 (the élite of Samaria filled with consternation sending to the new ruler a reply, the covenant affirmation of submission and subservience), 2 Sam 27, 12, a unique case in the OT as it is the superior party who speaks (Ashish, king of Gath and David the Philistine ally). Other instances of 'vassal' or 'servant' pacts concern Joseph and his brothers (Gen 44, 16 and 50, 18). The formula 'brother', occours in

1 Kgs 20, 31-34 (the defeated Bennadad sueing for peace with Ahab).

One of the main results of the study is the evidence that oral declaration could effect a covenantal union or reaffirm it or reestablish a broken agreement. The study also shows that the word *berith* (covenant) is not the only one to designate covenants in the OT.

Throughout the book the argument is developed very minutely, critically and methodically. The author knows to qualify his statements as uncertain, or probable.. Brief introductions and conclusions to each section help the reason to follow the argument. The book, of course, is technical; yet to the (more advanced) general reader it may reveal the general setting and milieu of the OT.

J. VOLCKAERT, S J.

Papacy of the Future

The Papacy in Transition. By Patrick GRANFIELD. *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan,* 1981. Pp. xi-228. £ 5.50.

On the road to unity between the Churches, not least between the Roman Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches, the papacy is a major, if not the greatest obstacle. Not necessarily, however, the papacy in itself, but the papacy as it has come to be exercised with the image it projects of centralised authority. In this context the question must be asked what belongs to the essence of the papal ministry, and what changes can and should be introduced in its concrete exercise in order that the goal of organic Christian unity may one day be reached. This is what Fr P. Granfield, a Benedictine historian and ecumenist, submits to careful analysis. His treatment is both historical and ecumenical.

In chs 1 and 7 he studies the historical evolution of the papal office, while in ch. 2 a whole catalogue of objections to the papacy is carefully examined. In chs 3 and 4 the institution is dealt with from a theological standpoint, especially within the framework of collegial ecclesiology. Then the author passes on to the relations between the papacy and modern ecumenism. He also suggests better ways of electing the popes of the future. Finally comes the crucial question: what would be the status of the pope in a united ecumenical Church ?

The author firmly believes in the papacy, but is also a critical historian. His intention is to help the Churches to unite; not, however, through the adoption of a common denominator which would fall short of the demands of faith. His scholarship is impressive; his exegesis of controversial documents sober and honest. He does not hide the fact that the definition of Vatican I on the papacy still remains a stumbling block, but shows the way for a re-interpretation of it by which the obstacle may be removed. Such a re-interpretation has only begun with Vatican II; it remains to be completed.

The book should be strongly recommended to professors and students of theological colleges. It will provide them with much of the material which is needed for a renewed, well-founded, understanding of the papacy.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Syro-Malankara Liturgy

Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit. The Prayer of Asian Churches. Vol. I: A Weekly Celebration of the Economy of Salvation. By Francis ACHARYA. *Vagamon, Kurisumala Ashram,* 1983. Pp. xv-257. Rs 27.

This is the second, revised and enlarged edition of the first volume of *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit,* first published in 1980. As the review of the first edition noted (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1981, p. 252), this volume is a synthesis of the West Syrian book of common prayer and the 'seeds of the word' contained in the Indian mystical tradition.

The main new features of this revised edition are the following: the psalms and canticles are presented in a new translation, directly from the Syriac Peshitta text; Syriac hymns, such as those on p. 56 and pp. 117-118 have been translated afresh; two priestly prayers, known as *Frumion-Sedro,* have been added (pp. 83 and 86), which offer a varied spiritual interpretation of profound theological truths; the complete text of the Sunday Service is now made available.

Fr George Nedungatt, professor of Oriental Canon Law in Rome, graces this new edition with a Foreword. He emphasizes the striking effect with which the author has made use of his sources. He also stresses the religio-cultural values embedded in the prayer-book and the help it provides for a contemplative approach to prayer.

'Take and read'; rather, take and pray. To appreciate the wealth the book contains one must not only read it but pray with it. Those who persue this treasure will not only find their own spiritual life enriched but also help others to grow into a deeper relation to God and his Church.

E. R. HAMBYE S.J.

Church in Sri Lanka

The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. The Dutch Period. Volume I: 1658-1711. By V. PERNIOLA, S.J. *Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo*, 1983. Pp. xliv-543. SL Rs 550 (Available from Asian Trading Corporation, Bangalore).

The fate of the Catholic people of Sri Lanka since the Dutch power replaced the Portuguese in 1658 was a pitiful one. There more than anywhere else the authorities of the Dutch East India Company used all the means at their disposal—they were many—to suppress Catholicism. For more than a hundred years a state of persecution prevailed.

At the time of the Dutch conquest all the clergy, mainly Portuguese, were forced to leave. Rome was soon made aware of the lamentable situation that ensued. It tried to reach some agreement with the States General of the Dutch Republic. The Hapsburg emperors, who then enjoyed better relations with Holland, were asked to use their influence. They tried to obtain the permission for some Catholic priests to come to Ceylon again. Those efforts failed.

At that juncture Fr Joseph Vaz arrived. He was one of the early members of the newly founded Oratory in Goa. He left, disguised as a mendicant, learned Tamil with the Jesuits in S. India, and reached Jaffna probably at the beginning of June 1687 (p. 52, note 1). Until his death in 1711, at the age 61, Catholic life in Sri Lanka depended primarily on him. After a short stay in Jaffna, Fr Vaz chose Kandy as his main residence, thus making it the centre of his wide-spread mission. During a few-month emprisonment at Kandy, he learned Singhalese. Soon a few other Oratorian priests, all Goan, joined him and shared his labours.

In this publication Fr Perniola has painstakingly gathered a large amount of material. It is indeed a source-book. The 145 documents he has translated come from many archival deposits, including Rome, Lisbon, Goa, Amsterdam, Colombo. Most of them are originally written in Portuguese, Latin, Italian, but a few in Dutch. As far as can be surmised, the English rendering is accurate, often felicitous, always readable.

While going through such a large collection, particularly about Fr Vaz, I wondered why such a great apostle is not yet venerated as a saint. In my eyes he ranks among the greatest of the Indian clergy in the 17th-18th century.

The present volume will be followed by two others covering the rest of the 18th century Though the personality of Fr Vaz will hardly appear in those subsequent volumes, it may be hoped that the high standard set by this one will be maintained.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Buddhist-Christian Dialogue

Buddhist-Christian Empathy. By Joseph J. SPAE. *The Chicago Institute of Theology and Culture/Tokyo, Oriens Institute for Religious Research*, 1980. Pp. 269. $ 16.

The present book is a excellent illustration of the new spirit in which of late Christianity is entering into dialogue with the world religions. Reluctance to meet among partners is being replaced by genuine "empathy".

The book is divided into three parts. Part One, with its five sections, is an attempt at tracing the basic features of the oriental religions, particularly of Buddhism with which the author is deeply familiar. Points of similarity where they exist, and of dissimilarity, are also brought out through the study. It is in this context that the advent of oriental religions in the West, and the Western quest for the Eastern religions, are traced and analysed.

Part Two, the main contribution of the book, has seven sections. We are taken to the basic tenets of Buddhism, its modern efforts at re-interpretation and its search for relevance in the context of Buddhism's encounter with modern scientific and technological culture as well as with Christianity. Two of the fundamental concepts of Buddhism, *karuna* and *bodhisattva*, are taken up for treatment, for these offer ample scope for very promising and fruitful dialogue with Christianity with its parallel teaching on redemptive sacri-

fice and love. Contemporary Buddhist ritual, and certain models of holiness are also studied. Some fruitful reflections on important pronouncements by some outstanding Japanese and other Eastern scholars are offered The section ends with a brief survey of influences of Buddhism upon the West, upon Christian theology in particular

Buddhist-Christian encounter is the theme of the four sections which constitute the third and final part of the book It begins with a discussion on the problems of dialogue among religions, "the momentous venture of the age" Dialogue is described, obstacles like claims of superiority and uniqueness, are listed, and mention is made of centres and organizations engaged in this task in a systematic manner This is followed by case studies of eight Buddhist-Christian dialogue ventures This part concludes with an impressive bibliography for a Buddhist-Christian encounter.

Buddhist-Christian Empathy is indeed a valuable contribution to the growing theology of religions and of dialogue Evidence of profound scholarship is unmistakable This, coupled with insights born of genuine relationship with friends in Buddhism, makes the book a pace-setter in many respects This affective empathy becomes in Joseph J Spae an intellectual quality, bestowing upon the entire treatment an attractive aura. This makes the reading of the book an intellectually refreshing undertaking

However, some of the questions which are raised remain unresolved, precisely, perhaps, because of the open approach Is dialogue unconditional in the Christian understanding and usage of the term ? Is *truth* the absolute norm for this unconditionality, making the venture a fresh search? To what extent will Christianity be ready to "relativize the semantic framework of (its) own tradition? Will "the paradox of diversity", with each tenet's roots in non-negotiable core experience, ever become "the well-spring of transcending unity"? To what extent can one stretch the identity of the "partners" and "the togetherness" of the participants? In other words, will the wide open door and vista be one day another subtle *device for an eventual swallowing up of all religions by one? These are questions that all Christian theologians are faced with.*

Probably the method opened up by the book will one day lead to satisfactory answers, and this is one of the many highly favourable impressions left in the mind of the reader

T K JOHN, S.J.

Kabīr

Bhakti in Kabīr. By William J. DWYER, S J. *Patna, Associated Book Agency*, 1981 Pp 305 Rs 100

The original Hindi version of this book was reviewed more than four years ago (VIDYAJYOTI 43, 1979, p 439) The English version is not just a translation the content has been considerably re-arranged and some material added The doctrines of *avatār* (which Kabīr rejects) and of grace have been studied at greater depth and there is an informative appendix about the disputed authorship of the *Bījak* (which is not accepted as Kabīrian), besides a glossary of terms. As mentioned in the earlier review, the study of this great figure of mediaeval India is done with professional competence, clarity and theological acumen The author is well informed about the trends in Kabīr studies done here and abroad, and is not afraid of parting ways even with reputed scholars The study centres largely on an analysis of Kabīr's religious vocabulary, noting where possible the ancestry of the words he uses most and the special meaning they acquire in his poetry. Thus Kabīr is placed in a broad context of various contemporary cults in Northern India, particularly the important Nāth sampradāya. This study will surely be an indispensable point of reference for future work on Kabīr who, with his universalism and anti-sectarianism, appears as a particularly relevant figure in present day conflict-ridden North India The style of the work is very fluent and pleasing, but there are too many printing mistakes throughout the book

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J.

Cum permissu superiorum

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII MARCH 1984 No. 3

Editorial

Women today are actively conscious of the full value of women's personhood and hence of the depth of their historical victimhood. Christian women are affirming their ontological and theological goodness, their rights to be respected in ministry and their need to break free from those limitations that have been imposed on them by particular cultures. The sacredness of woman can no longer be defined through the sacredness of man.

This issue of VIDYAJYOTI is not a comprehensive survey of the women's movement nor of feminist theology. It is a collection of responses and views of a few authors who have expressed their own experience, knowledge, hopes and aspirations within the feminist perspective. Pearl DREGO gives an overview of woman's importance in salvation history. Janet KALVEN makes a survey of current literature and feminist themes. Regina COLL looks at sin and morality from the feminist view-point. Rita MONTEIRO shares her impressions on mythical images of women in Indian films.

Women Religious have long been confined within the limits of convents and institutions. They are now awakening to new forms of ministry whereby they may identify with the people, witnessing among them to values of simplicity, poverty and justice. Fr F. RODRIGUES reports on new rural ministries for women religious in India.

The new feminism is not just a theory or a fad of foreign origin but a growing force in the life of all humankind. This force draws men to a new understanding of their humanity transcending their masculinity, and frees them from the dominance they unconsciously exercise over women. Women are challenged to recognize that the only path of Christian social freedom is to refuse the role of being oppressed and at the same time to refuse to become the oppressors. In the words of Paolo Freire: "It is only the oppressed who, by freeing themselves, can free their oppressors."

The liberation of women has to be achieved by women themselves and not to be received as a donation from the rest of humanity.

The Feminist View-Point

Pearl DREGO*

THE theological perspective on women is undergoing a radical change in the 1980s. In the previous decade a new axe was laid to the root of the current one-down position of women in the Church. Indeed, the struggle for women's justice in the Church is much older than that, going back to the middle ages. However, flanked and supported by the raising of women's consciousness in secular society the feminist movement in Christianity has come to stay. It may be feared, resented, treated indulgently, amusedly or reluctantly, but it cannot be ignored. The pioneer thrust came from Europe and the U.S., with Asian and Latin American women theologians soon picking up the clarion call. It cannot be dismissed as a Western product because the feminist challenge rings at the very heart of the mystery of the Incarnation and the proclamation of the resurrection to all humankind.

We needed women theologians, scripture scholars, psychologists and sociologists to raise the flag and begin the reinterpretation of theology from a feminist perspective. The great names already in this field are Rosemary Radford Ruether, Mary Daly, Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, Phyllis Trible, Merlin Stone, Sheila Collins, Judith Palskow, Carol P. Christ, Mary Buckley, Eleanor McLaughlin, Janet Kalven, and a host of others. Publications and articles on women are multiplying by geometrical progression. Besides, it is not just the learned, charismatic women leaders who are seeing their Christian womanhood in a new light. The "woman in the pew" is being moved to accept her dignity, rights and involvement. She can smell the paternalism in the remark, "But of course there's room for women in the Church — cleaning, cake-sales, tea-making, flowers-arranging, bazaars...". The call to women to "make your own feminine contribution" is a subtle handcuff, one that women themselves find difficult to recognize because for so long we have accepted the narrow confines of a "typically feminine nature".

*Miss Pearl DREGO is a Grail member, psychotherapist and trainer. She directs the Transactional Analytical Centre for Education, Research and Training (TACET), New Delhi. She works for cultural liberation of village women, professional women, religious and youth.

The feminist challenge is not just a search for new theological meanings of the word "feminine" in an attempt to give women a little uplift. The true feminist viewpoint requires a new frame of reference with which to look at human history and salvation history.

A feminist theology is much more than a theology of women. While the latter authenticates the creative mission and role of women in the scheme of salvation, a feminist theology brings a radical refocussing of the whole Christian theology, catechesis, ministry, both in theory and application. It is not an act of pouring new wine into old wineskins. It is an end to oppression and the dawn of liberation in the happiness of peace and communion of God's own people.

> The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me; he has sent me to announce good news to the poor, to proclaim release for prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind; to let the broken victims go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour (Luke 4:18-19).

This reverberates in the hearts of women who recognize their victimhood in a secondary subserviant role in the Church, who are prisoners of historical traditions that insult their humanity. Jesus' words have also a powerful meaning for men, who have accepted the bondage of being superior to women, and who are blind to the subordination and injustice done to women. Both women and men are asked to see how the inequalities between the sexes is a vital element of structural sin.

If the preaching of Jesus requires socio-cultural liberation from structural sin as an integral part of the good news, then socio-cultural liberation requires the liberation of women as an integral part. The critique of women's place in the Church and her position in society, is part of the proclamation of salvation, with its call to repentance and conversion.

This proclamation, heard by the women in our age, is an integral part of Jesus' call to each human person: to shed the darkness of bondage and be received into the *basileia* of God. This call involves both an interior experience and a social commitment. The experience of faith leads to an internal transformation which in turn generates a new communion of relationships with others, one which is beyond the socio-cultural prescriptions of a given group. Therefore the good news of Jesus has to have a radical impact on the relationships between men and women which form such a big part of any social network.

The freedom of women from centuries of oppression is an integral part of Christian freedom. This is emphasized by another historical event: The secular movement for women's rights in both Western and

Eastern countries in recent decades is a "sign of the times", a current feature of the world scene. The living struggle of oppressed women cries for prophetic support and theological protection from those who preach Christ's message of faith and freedom.

Jesus and Women

Accounts of Jesus' life indicate several occasions when he is presented as reaching out to women, men and children, beyond the customary norms of acceptable Jewish male behaviour. He turns the concept of greatness upside down when asked who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. In a society where greatness had heavy social, political, racist and religious connotations he presents a child as the symbol of greatness (Mat 18: 1-4). In an age when the people of Judea proper looked with deep scorn and centuries of resentment at their fellow Israelites living in Samaria, Jesus asks a Samaritan woman for a drink of water (John 4: 7). In a world in which Pharisees were most highly respected for their moral and intellectual qualities, Jesus declared that prostitutes had a better chance of entering God's kingdom than the Pharisees (Mat 21: 31). In a society where the patriarchal dominance of the father was uppermost Jesus says: "Call no man your father on earth", sounding the end of the era of male domination in human culture. It is a woman who honours him with the very expensive ointment carried in an alabaster jar. When the men complain of its wastage from their utilitarian viewpoint Jesus upholds the woman's gesture with a startling prophecy:

> Truly I say to you, wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what she has done will be told in *memory of her* (Mark 14:9)

These special words of Jesus are brought to woman's consciousness today by the scripture scholar Elizabeth Schüssler-Fiorenza in her recent book, *In Memory of Her.*

The call of Jesus to freedom was not only to the women of his times but also to the women of all future centuries. The metanoia as experienced by women will affect their social situation precisely because the call to freedom given by Jesus is felt by the human being, both individually and as a person-in-relationship, a person-in-society. The Christian transformation has a radical impact on the social structure, social roles, social oppression and status of the human beings who are called to Christ; "So if the Son makes you free you will be freed indeed" (John 8: 36). It is this dual call to inner freedom and social liberation that is felt by women, as rebirth of selfhood as well as a re-organization of her relationships to other women, to men, and to the socio-cultural systems in which she lives. Mark shows Jesus using

caring words towards women. For Jairus' daughter, he has a special affectionate phrase: "My little one, stand up." To the woman cured of a haemorrhage, "Take heart daughter..." are the inspiring words recorded by Matthew (9: 22).

In a milieu where widows were not important Jesus values the contribution of the poor widow who puts in two copper coins — an oppressed woman giving with generosity. He is reported to uphold her as a model for his disciples: "This poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury" (Mark 12: 43). This is in contrast to the men who oppress the widows (Mark 12: 40).

In raising the widow of Nain's son as recounted by Luke, once again we see Jesus' daring as he challenges Jewish customs of laws of uncleanness and shows a concern for women that is most unusual and unwarranted by Jewish culture. He does not sermonise the woman to accept her suffering but relieves it, fulfilling her need to have her son alive. Even without her asking, he crosses the invisible walls between men and women, to approach her and respond to her compassionately.

In the interpretations and exhortations to Christian values which they derive from the encounters of Jesus with women described in the synoptics, authors often place the emphasis in such a way that Jesus appears to be a benevolent male, condescending towards helpless, misguided, sinful women. The fallenness of the woman at the well and of the woman caught in adultery is heightened because we are shown them through cultural eyes that accentuate the so-called femininity of their plight. Women are *expected* to be in such positions. The lepers, the man with the withered hand, the criple, these are men who should not have been the way they are, since they are men.

If, however, we look at the miracles experienced by women through a feminist view-point, other important nuances become apparent. The conversation with the woman of Samaria is not, then, a declaration of Jesus' cleverness in knowing about her sins, like a know-all moralistic judge before whom no one can escape. Rather he relates to her current life, speaking about the relationships in which she is caught and drawing her to the eternal waters of his powerful message. This woman had allowed seven men to dominate her womanhood. Now she is called to freedom. Not only does Jesus ask her to look after him by providing water but he gives her a theological discourse of the highest order, trusting her with the depth of his message and giving

her a special personal revelation of his identity. He spoke with her in such a way that, as John tells us, even his disciples marvelled at it (John 4: 21-27). John breaks all conventions in providing a woman as a paradigm for the journey of faith.

So also with the woman caught in adultery. Jesus is not just a *merciful rescuer of a guilty woman.* The law of Moses pronounced a terrible punishment for those found unchaste (Deut 22: 13-23). Jesus challenges not just the act of stoning but the system by which the woman is declared deserving of being stoned. The law gives harsh punishment to woman. *The men were familiar with a system in which women came the worse off and received more negative sanctions than men. But* Jesus places the men who are to do the stoning, and the women to be stoned, on an equal footing before justice: "That one of you who is faultless must throw the first stone." This indicates that in the new order, men and women will be judged by the same yardstick and men will not be permitted to exercise violence over women. The double standard is exploded. In a society where women had to be proved virgins, while men did not, Jesus was turning the spotlight on men, questioning their authority over women. Jesus saves the life of the woman, takes away the power of the man to dominate her, and then sends her to begin a new life. He does not show her pity but gives her respect, guidance, love.

The impact of Jesus on the life of the women who followed him challenged their personal relationships as well as the expectations society put upon women. In Jewish society a woman was prized for the work she produced and the service she rendered to others:

> ... (She) works with willing hands.
> She is like the ships of the merchant,
> she brings her food from afar.
> She rises while it is yet night
> and provides food for her household......
> and does not eat the bread of idleness (Prov 31:13-15, 27).

Because of the expectations on the women of that day we can then understand how justified Martha felt when she complained of Mary's neglect of her womanly chores: "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone ? Tell her then to come and help me" (Luke 10: 40-42). However Jesus upholds Mary's right to be different, to have other priorities and to have her eyes fixed on the one thing he has come for: "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things; one thing is needful. Mary has chosen the good portion, which shall not be taken away from her" (Luke 10: 41-42). To me it appears as though both Martha and Mary are called to go

beyond their prescribed feminine roles. To Martha's hidden implication, "Her place is in the household", Jesus responds with a more powerful and radical implication: "No, her place is with me." He is shown to give women an equal right with men to be listeners of the Word, not just servers of the household.

Martha and Mary are both called to discipleship. Jesus' words to Martha can be addressed to all women who are bound in the confines of a narrow feminism and stuck in the mesh of household chores, looking after everyone else's needs rather than meeting their spiritual destiny. In the Jewish world the husband was accustomed to sit at the doorways, talking about important matters, while the women were inside working. "Her husband is known in the gates, when he sits among the elders of the land" (Prov 31: 23). In the scene with the two sisters it is a woman who sits discoursing with the Lord of the elders, and Jesus declares that it is right and fitting for her to do so. He does not say that she should do the household chores later but rather brings a sharp contrast between serving in the usual feminine fashion and following the Lord. Jesus does not waste his time trying to upgrade the feminine role by giving new dignity to the old task. On the contrary he creates an alternative.

A woman's freedom in Christ, therefore, includes at the core her freedom from the systems of dominance that diminish her personhood by imprisoning her womanhood. The Christian feminist view-point automatically leads to a critique of the historic-cultural traditions that have given women a distorted image of thier bodies, their abilities, their responsibilities, their dignity and their destiny. Each woman is called to be transformed as person and as woman, not in such a way as to become a "happy slave" seeing blessedness in the subservience demanded by society, but as an individual gifted with human dignity and salvific splendour no less than her male counterparts.

The scribes and pharisees of today's milieu, i.e., the interpreters and upholders of culture in the world's many social groupings, will be affronted by the new demands women make on themselves and on the men. So women need to be prepared to face the opposition, the misunderstanding, the false expectations that Jesus himself faced. Most of all, they will be challenged to live as sisters, without making victims of themselves or of others, without oppressing other women, men or children. However, the struggle against inequalities between women and men will be a long one, requiring historical study, daily reflection on life-situations and spiritual awakening; for, the new movement has to challenge the rest of theology to see with eyes that

are non-discriminating, to revive the proclamation of women's role in the Old Testament, *to underline how Jesus involved women in his ministry, how women were active leaders in the early Christian communities and right down the centuries.*

The call to discipleship and mission, the call to Church leadership, the theology of marriage, ministry and maternity will undergo a renewal from the feminist perspective. We will then read scripture in a new way and Christian art will feel the impact of this, even in minor details, as for instance where Jesus is shown taking a little child to himself (Mat 18: 2; Mark 9: 36; Luke 9: 47). This scene is traditionally read and depicted as Jesus placing a male child in the midst of his disciples. The Greek renders 'child' in the neuter gender and we could well see Jesus taking a little girl by his side to illustrate the divine message. In the new perspective we shall see the faces of women among the disciples who were personally sent on mission by Jesus and we shall see women too, not just the twelve apostles, seated together with him for the eucharistic passover before his crucifixion; we will "see" the women at the cross, the women who were first to announce the resurrection, and the women present at Pentecost.

The amazing dimensions of women's involvement in the life of Jesus can only be understood if seen in the context of the position of women in Jewish society.

The feminist writer Phyllis Bird shows that the primary roles of Jewish women were wife and mother. The laws were also largely in the male gender so that people were addressed through the men. Jewish women carried the stigma of Eve, and were defined in terms of their sexual relationship with men. "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife", is addressed to men (Exodus 20: 17). Women are objects, not the subjects of the law. Though they do have roles as judge, prophetess, queen, the dominant value set before them is that of obedient wife, prized daughter and bearer of children who will continue the family name. Even when woman was allowed to inherit land, if her father or husband was alive she was under his authority and had to get his permission before disposing of property. Woman is under the authority of man, even in making vows of the Lord: "If it is in her husband's house that a woman makes a vow or puts herself under a binding obligation or oath. . ., if her husband clearly repudiates them when he hears of them, then nothing that she has uttered. . . shall be valid" (Numbers 30: 10-12).

Men could divorce their wives but wives could not do likewise: "When a man has married a wife, yet she does not win his favour

because he finds something shameful in her, and he writes her a note of divorce, gives it to her and dismisses her. . ." (Deut 24: 1). *This is the background against which we hear Jesus confronting the old one-sided system which degraded the status of the wife. He announces partnership and equality in marriage, reminding his hearers that "from the beginning of creation, 'God made them male and female. . . ."* (Mark 10: 6). Mark further reports Jesus as providing a protection for women: "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another, commits adultery against her; and if she divorces her husband and marries another, she commits adultery" (Mark 10: 11-12). Here again Jesus addressed the rule to both men and women equally, both having the option to divorce and both being charged equally if they do. The obligation, as Jesus announces it, is mutual. In his code of ethics woman has the same origin, meaning, value and responsibility as that assigned to man. So he includes women in his ministry and his following. They are not left out of the events. Luke shows Jesus being helped and accompanied by women as well as the twelve. "And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means" (Luke 8: 2-3).

Luke considers it important enough to name and identify some of the women. He treats them as important. Scripture scholars are also ascertaining that women must have been present at the last Supper as the custom in those days would warrant; otherwise their absence would have been specified. Therefore the eucharist and the commission to "Do this in remembrance of me" was also given to them. Studies, for example of Luke, indicate that he did think of a group larger than the Twelve at the Supper. The fact that the Twelve are given special mention does not exclude the presence of others. Besides, the Pasch was normally celebrated in the family, with the women cooking and serving and partaking. Both in Acts and in his Gospel, Luke uses "disciples" to include women as well as men believers. Quentin Quesnell is one of those who show how Jesus' words at the Supper in Luke 22 indicate the presence of women. For example, "Let the greater among you be as the younger and the leader as the one who serves" (22: 26). Quesnell states that the younger ones and those who serve were hard to identify among the Twelve. The only persons in Luke who are said to serve Jesus are Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4: 39), the women of Galilee (Luke 8: 3), and Martha (Luke 10: 40).

Traditional View of Woman

Yet the early Christian *communities found it hard to separate from the Jewish patriarchal attitude to women. Paul is the champion of equality:*

> *In Christ there is no more Jew or Greek,*
> *slave or freeman,*
> *male or female (Gal 3:27-28).*

Yet it is Paul who is saddled with the following theological atrocity:

> The head of the woman is the man.... For a man indeed ought not to cover his head, for as much as he is the image and glory of God, but the woman is the glory of man. For the man is not of the woman, but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man (1 Cor 11:3, 7-9)

In the review of this text much attention has been given to the custom of covering the head. But the real blow to women is in the reasons given for the custom, viz., that she is not equal to man since she is made for him, that she is not the image of God, but he is. This tradition has continued into the Church down the centuries Others picked up where Paul left off. St John Chrysostom in the late fourth century says:

> The woman taught once, and ruined all On this account let her not teach...the sex is weak and fickle .the whole female race transgressed

Just as Paul said that woman shall be saved in child-bearing (1 Tim 2: 15), so St John Chrysostom says: "Let her not, however, grieve. God had given her no small consolation, that of child-bearing."

St Augustine slightly modifies the theme when he says that "The women together with her own husband is the image of God"; yet he also is of the opinion that separately, apart from man, if taken in herself alone, "she is not the image of God." (On the Holy Trinity, III). St Thomas Aquinas declares women to be defective and misbegotten since the production of woman comes from some defect. Tertullian is quite offensive in his language:

> And do you not know that you are Eve? God's sentence hangs still over all your sex and his punishment weighs down upon you. You are the devil's gateway... With what ease you shattered that image of God: man! Because of the death you merited the Son of God had to die

These accusations and disrespect given to the whole class of women was nourished by the cultural milieu of the Christian communities and by their interpretation of scripture through culturally prejudiced eyes. Even today children are introduced to the creation story with the image of a male creator, aged, bearded and patriarchal, who

created man, then woman as man's assistant. The woman is tempted and deceived; she tempts the man and then both are punished. This *primitive rendering makes women ashamed of their womanhood, guilty of crime, burdened with the obligation of making good by complete subservience. Men are still collecting payment for a projected guilt.*

Feminist Theology

This distorted view of man-woman relationships comes from a particular reading of the version in Genesis 2: 22; "The Lord God then built up the rib which he had taken out of the man, into a woman. He brought her to the man. . . ." Here woman is second to man, subject to him and derived from him. Yet what the English translation misses is the change in the Hebrew of the Masoretic text i.e., from *adam*, a generic term, to *ish*, a specific term applied to man. Besides, Genesis 2 seems a contradiction to the Genesis 1: 27-28 narrative in which God brings both man and woman into existence in the same act of creation: "So God created man in his own image; in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them; "Be fruitful and increase, fill the earth and subdue it, rule over the fish in the sea, the birds of heaven, and every living thing that moves upon the earth !" This text shows equality rather than subservience and support the view that complementarity of the sexes is not a way to get women to "fill in the gaps" and make up for what is missing in men, but a way to recognise that each sex is unique, each is special and both form a harmony.

Where there is agreement in what constitutes the uniqueness of man and the uniqueness of woman, the source is culture. In many societies what is typically masculine and typically feminine is determined by the socialization process. If we simply theologize the cultural disparities e.g., man as rational and active, woman is intuitive and receptive, woman as emerging from and completing man, then we have already caged both man and woman into different compartments and we will read scripture through these cultural prejudices.

The new feminist theology bursts out of such captivity and does not limit the potentiality, role, qualities and functions of woman to any particular sphere of life. Rather the emphasis is on woman formed by God's own intimate act of creation — woman, who has the power of naming, a human person who shares in all aspects of the work of building the earth and spreading the kingdom. As Phyllis Bird remarks:

> Woman is, along with man, the direct and intentional creation of God and the crown of his creation. Man and woman were made for each other. To-

gether they constitute humankind, which is in its full and essential nature bisexual.

It is only in the order of sin that woman becomes slave; nor does she become a slave any more than man. "I will put enmity between you and the woman" (Gen 3. 15). Traditionally woman is seen as the chronological cause of original sin, the curse of the human race, the tempted and the temptress in sequence ! Yet a new look at scripture from the woman's angle shows that Eve is not the cause of sin in the world. Sin was not born of woman. The chronological sequence in which Eve is first to eat of the fruit does not indicate theological responsibility. Both human persons are caught up in the act of disobedience. We could also say that the woman, described as "first" to disobey, represents the core of humankind. Evil struck at the depths — womanhood ! This puts woman out of the shadowy role of the guilty, the weakest and most vulnerable, into the role of human representative, and leader.

The new theology of woman also sees Mary in a different light. She is not so much the humble, obedient servant of God but rather a co-creator, companion and co-operator with God. Her deep acceptance of God's will is not an act of becoming nothing in his eyes and handing over to him. Rather it is an act of courage, an openness to be transformed, a readiness to be an architect in the plan of salvation, to crush the force of evil and liberate the world from the Unknown to the Known. Mary is not only a woman of surrender; she is a woman of power. Her 'Yes' to God was an act of daring, with a woman's confidence, to stand in faith against the established biological and cultural traditions surrounding the birth of a child. Through the re-interpretation of Mary's role, the primal images for woman move away from that of helper, assistant, slave, to that of partner, initiator and pioneer.

In this perspective Mary Magdalene also appears as the one entrusted to proclaim the resurrection to Peter and the apostles. Traditionally she has been hallowed as "sinner turned repentant", while her privileged role of being the first to see the Risen Jesus is much neglected. Yet all four gospels credit her with the part of being the first witness to the empty tomb, maybe in the company of other women. In the new order of Redemption Jesus has decided to appear first to a woman in an encounter of loving recognition.

The great text of Paul in Gal 3: 27-28, "In Christ there is no more Jew or Greek, slave or freeman, male or female", is also a foundation for the new theology of woman. There is no discrimination, no exclu-

sion of women in Christ's plan — all are equal and equally important in his eyes.

From the standpoint of justice, Christ has come to free those in slavery. Since women are certainly among the oppressed, he has a liberating message for them. Therefore, if the Church reflects the oppression of women and the denials to women found in secular society, in her own structures she is not being true to her founder, Jesus Christ.

As Catherine Halkes in her open letter to Pope John II rightly says:

> The liberation of women has arisen from their desires both to become their own subject of existence and to humanize the structures of Church and society through their collaboration . . The new experience of selfhood growing among women is a sign of hope for a fuller humanity for both men and women, and for the breakdown of unjust power structures.

At the time this issue was going to the press the death occurred of Fr Joseph Putz, S.J., who was the editor of THE CLERGY MONTHLY from 1940 April to 1973 November. An Obituary will follow in one of the next issue.

Feminist Theology in the United States

Janet KALVEN*

THE ferment produced by the women's movement in the United States in due course has had its effect upon the Churches. Beginnings of a feminist theology can be traced back to Elizabeth Cady Stanton who in 1898 published *The Women's Bible*, the first attempt by feminists to collect the biblical passages "directly referring to women and those also in which women are made prominent by exclusion" and to retranslate, reinterpret and criticize them. The publication split the women's suffrage movement, but Stanton and her collaborators saw clearly that women would never achieve their full stature as adult human beings so long as religion was used to legitimatize woman's inferiority as "Adam's rib", "seductress and source of sin". While Charlotte Perkins Gilman, another early feminist theorist published her critique under the title *His Religion and Hers* in 1923, most other feminists, fearing to stir up a hornet's nest of criticism, left the criticism of religion strictly alone.

In the mid-1960's the second wave of American feminism burst upon the scene with the publication (in 1964) of Betty Friedan's *Feminist Mystique*. In this age of mass media, social movements move with unprecedented speed. In short order innumerable groups had sprung up all over the country, varying from NOW (National Organization for Women) with its emphasis on legislative change to groups like WITCH (Women's International Terrorist Conspiracy from Hell), Red Stockings, Bread and Roses, with their guerilla theatre tactics of crowning a sheep at the Miss America contest and staging sit-ins in publishers' offices. Following the model of black studies, Women's Studies programs sprang into being at colleges and universities. In 1969, there were no courses in women's studies. By 1979, there were thousands of courses and 300 degree programs, some even offering graduate degrees.

---

*Miss Janet KALVEN is a Grail member, theologian and educationist in U.S.A. She is currently editing a book, *Women's Spirit Bonding*, and coordinating exchange between feminist theologians and professionals.

There was something of a cultural lag before the rising tide of consciousness among women reached the Churches. In 1969 women at the annual assembly of the National Council of Churches staged a public demonstration in protest against their minority status. Soon women's caucuses began to form in many of the main line Protestant Churches and in the American Academy of Religion. Conferences and publications multiplied. In 1975 the first Women's Ordination Conference, organized by Catholic nuns and lay women, drew 1300 people to Detroit and set the ordination issue in the broad context of a new concept of ministry. In the early 70's there was a great influx of women into the seminaries — the number of women seminarians doubled between 1972 and 1975. Finding themselves in an environment where both content and structures have been shaped by an age-old heritage of misogynist steriotypes, these women began to organize alternative forms of theological education to supplement a patriarchal curriculum. In September, 1983, the Women's Theological Centre opened in Boston a year long program, integrating theory and praxis, spirituality and ministry, in a feminist perspective. This program offers credits toward the M. Div. degree.

It should be noted that the impact of feminism has been felt on all religious traditions in the United States — Catholic, Protestant and Jewish, Evangelical, Mormon, fundamentalist (although among the fundamentalists the response, so far as I know, has been totally negative). In all the other traditions, women who are committed both religiously and as feminists have been sharing experiences, developing their reflections, and searching for a theology and a spirituality that would meet their minimum requirements, namely: a positive definition of themselves as women; an equal voice in leadership and decision making in the community of believers; and forms of worship which do not denigrate women but celebrate their existence and contributions. This search has produced an extensive literature — new volumes come from the presses almost daily. I do not pretend to be familiar with all this work, but simply looking at the books on my own shelves, I can group them roughly into the following categories:

Literature in Feminist Theology

1. *New translations and interpretations of Scripture* from a feminist perspective. Among the workers in this field are Letty Russell, Anne McGrew Bennett, Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, Rachel C. Wahlberg, Phyllis Trible. In her book, *God and the Rhetoric of Sexuality*, Trible shows how far-reaching this work can be. By careful textual analysis, she demonstrates that the key image in the term *raḥûm*, usually trans-

lated as God's mercy or compassion, is womb or uterus. *Reḥem*, the Hebrew for womb, is the root both of *rahamîm*, compassion, and *rḥm*, to show mercy. Yahweh not only governs the womb, decreeing fruitfulness or barrenness, but is depicted as one who conceives, is pregnant, suffers labour pains, gives birth and nurses a child. Starting from the clue in Genesis 1. 27, "Male and female God created them", Trible uncovers a rich but hitherto neglected vein of female imagery for God in the Old Testament. To this category belong also the various attempts to find inclusive language for worship, e g., the new lectionary of the National Council of Churches, and the prayer books by E. M. Broner and other Jewish women.

2 *The recovery of the hidden history* of women's lives and contributions. History is a story that the victors tell about the vanquished. As Gustavo Gutiérrez, the Latin American liberation theologian writes, "Human history has been written by a white hand, a male hand from the dominating social class. .. Attempts have been made to wipe from the minds of the defeated the memory of their struggles. This is to deprive them of a source of energy, of a historical will to rebellion." Or as artist Judy Chicago puts it succinctly, "In our heritage is our power." Among the titles in this field: *Foremothers* by Janice Nunnally-Cox; *All the Women of the Bible* by Edith Deen; *Women of Spirit, Female Leadership in the Jewish and Christian Traditions*, edited by Eleanor McLaughlin and Rosemary Ruether, *Women and Religion in America*, a three-volume documentary history of the contributions of women, black and white, Protestant, Catholic and Jewish, to American religious life.

A particularly significant work in this field is *In Memory of Her, A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* by Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza. Using all the scholarly tools of her formidable background as a German-trained exegete and theologian, Fiorenza elaborates a hermeneutics and a historical-critical method which she applies to the New Testament texts and their social-cultural context. She presents a fresh picture of the leadership of women as apostles, prophets and founders in the early Church. The criteria for apostleship in Luke are twofold: accompanying Jesus in his ministry, and being an eyewitness to the resurrection, to which Paul adds a third, being commissioned by the Risen Lord. Fiorenza notes that according to all four gospels, these criteria are fulfilled pre-eminently by women, and in particular by Mary of Magdala who is repeatedly mentioned by name. Fiorenza also traces the patriarchalizing influences in the Hellenistic culture of the Roman Empire that gradually transform the egalitarian, counter-cultural Jesus movement into the hierarchical order

of Church and family, as Christianity first wins toleration in the society and then is established as the imperial religion.

3. In a third category are *works which use the prophetic principle*, found in scripture in the God who vindicates the poor and oppressed, both to critique religious traditions and to construct an alternative vision of a Church and a theology that would be non-sexist, non-racist, non-classist. Some titles: *The Church and the Second Sex* by Mary Daly and *Beyond God the Father*, also by Daly; *Religion and Sexism: Images of Women in the Judaeo-Christian Tradition*, edited by Ruether and McLaughlin; *New Woman, New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation*, and *Sexism and God-Talk*, both by Rosemary Ruether; *Womanspirit Rising, A Feminist Reader in Religion*, edited by Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow; *Green Paradise Lost* and *Patriarchy as a Conceptual Trap*, both by Elizabeth Dodson Gray; *Behind the Sex of God: Toward a New Consciousness — Transcending Matriarchy and Patriarchy* by Carol Ochs; *Women, Ministry and the Church* by Joan Chittister; *Feminism and Christianity: A Two-Way Reflection* by Denise L. Carmody; *Beyond Mere Obedience* by Dorothee Soelle; *In a Different Voice* by Carol Gilligan.

Outstanding in this category is *Sexism and God-Talk: Toward a Feminist Theology*. In this work, Ruether on the basis of the prophetic principle and the feminist principle, i e., that women are full human beings, reviews the major themes of traditional systematic theology: God and God-language, creation, humankind as male and female, sin and conversion, Christology, Mariology, ministry, ecclesiology, eschatology — demonstrating conclusively that a feminist theology is most emphatically NOT a "theology of woman", fitting a few doctrines about women into the existing framework, but rather involves a profound reconceptualizing of the whole of theology.

4. Finally, there are *those who look to non-Christian traditions*. Some Christian and Jewish women who find their religious traditions irredeemably patriarchal have abandoned the quest for liberating elements in the tradition. Instead they look to the religions of the ancient near east and of the Greco-Roman world, to the native American religions, and to the Wicce tradition (the old religion of the great mother goddess which traces its roots back to pre-Christian tribal religions of the West and which is enjoying a resurgence among feminists today). Some titles in this area: *The Changing of the Gods* by Naomi Goldenberg; *The Spirit Dance, A Rebirth of the Ancient Religion of the Great Goddess* and *Dreaming the Dark: Magic, Sex and Politics*, both by a young Jewish woman, Miriam Semos, who has taken the

name of Starhawk; *The Politics of Women's Spirituality, Essays on the Rise of Spiritual Power within the Feminist Movement*, edited by Charlene Spretnak, *Gyn-ecology, The Metaethics of Radical Feminism* by Mary Daly.

Characteristics of Feminist Theology

Clearly feminist theology covers a wide spectrum and embraces many tensions Nevertheless, I will venture to sketch a few characteristics which are shared by most, if not all, who identify themselves as feminist theologians.

1. *An understanding of theology as a process* rather than the handing down of a fixed body of abstract universal doctrines by a hierarchical body of authoritative teachers. Most feminists prefer to speak of "doing theology" or "theologizing" to stress the open-ended character of their work The Spirit is at work among us — revelation is an on-going process to be read in the signs of the times. Reflecting together we begin to discern the work of the Spirit. We theologize out of the concrete and necessarily limited experiencec of our own lives. Any particular formulation is tentative, to be supplemented by other reflections coming out of a different but equally valid experience and contributing to an on-going process in which no one has "the last word".

2. *The affirmation of the full humanity of women.* Whatever promotes the full humanity of women is of the holy; whatever diminishes or denies it is sinful What is new here is that women are claiming full humanity for themselves, and moreover are insisting that their full humanity has not yet existed in history, since most (or perhaps all cultures to some degree) have defined women as relative, dependent and inferior, the second sex and second-class citizens. Feminists reject the attempts to find a biological basis for female inferiority, whether these are based on the erroneous biology of Aristotle and Aquinas for whom "the female is a misbegotten male", or on the latest, sophisticated attempts of the sociobiologists to prove the inevitability of patriarchy.

3. *The critique of all known cultures as patriarchal*, i.e., valuing males above females, taking the male as the norm of the human, the true adult human persons, the makers of history and culture. Patriarchal values may be expressed differently in different cultures. Thus, in the United States there is concern that when biological techniques allow parents to determine the sex of the unborn, they will show a strong preference for boy babies. In some non-western cultures, patriarchy

translates into female infanticide and, when there is not enough food to go around, into feeding boy children better than girls.

4. *The critique certainly of Western culture* (and probably of other cultures) *as sexist.* In the United States the civil rights movement has made us aware of the structural and systemic character of racism. Similarly, sexism is not just a matter of individual acts and prejudices. Rather it is a set of structures embodying the pre-eminence of the male in laws, government, the economy, science, the arts, religion. Under sexism, women and men form separate castes with different and unequal access to resources, education, social status and decision-making. Moreover, as Margaret Mead has observed, in most cultures males tend to phrase their own roles negatively, that is, in terms of something which women cannot or should not do. Hence, the exclusion of women from medicine, law, theology, priesthood, public life etc.

5. *The critique of Western (and other) cultures as misogynist.* Literally translated as "hatred of women", misogyny is an ancient, very deep mistrust of women, their bodily functions, their sexuality, leading to fear, hatred and taboos. Myths of female evil have old roots in Western culture. Thus, Pandora, Lilith, Eve. Listen to the Greek, Hesiod: "From Pandora, the first woman, comes the race of women, who are an evil to man with a nature to do evil." And Ecclesiasticus: "Through a woman sin first began; such fault was hers, we all must die for it."

Feminist theologians point to the psychological mechanism of projection behind these myths. A man, looking at a woman, feels uncontrollable stirrings of lust and proceeds to label the woman as lustful. Thus, Aquinas can write that the voices of women should not be heard in Church because they can engender lust — a thoroughly androcentric point of view. But male voices can engender lust in females. The solution is not to be found in scapegoating one sex as dangerous and seductive but in finding ways to use our sexual powers humanly. Even so strong a woman as Teresa of Avila internalized a negative self-image from these misogynist teachings. "The very thought that I am a woman is enough to make my wings droop", she wrote.

6. *The assertion of the authority of women's experience.* This is a corollary of the full humanity of women. In the consciousness-raising groups characteristic of the movement, women began to get in touch with their own experience, to speak honestly about what they themselves saw and felt rather than what they were supposed to see and feel. They were not unlike the little boy in the fairy tale who blurted out, "But the emperor has no clothes." As women began to voice

the unthinkable, they discovered that they were not alone, that others had the same experiences, and began to realize how thoroughly the culture has been shaped by men out of male experience. Consciousness-raising leads to the task of transforming culture in general and theology in particular in the light of women's experience. In Mary Daly's phrase, our task is to rename ourselves, the universe and the transcendent. Affirmed by their sharing of experience, feminists are determined not to betray their insights but to use them both as a source of critique and as a theological locus. The "aha" experience, the break-through of insight, is a moment of grace.

7. *The rejection of sexist language* and the search for a new, inclusive language The limits of our language are the limits of our thought. Many tribes use the word for their own tribe as equivalent to "human", thus effectively reducing the others, the outsiders, the "barbarians", to less than human status. Similarly, in many languages the word for human is identical to the word for male, thus reducing women to subordinate status. The social sciences have taught us the power of naming as a form of social control We understand the mechanisms by which the oppressed groups internalize the myth of their own inferiority and are thereby prevented from stepping out of "their place" far more effectively than by use of force. Sexist language is particularly painful in worship The "pray brethren" in the liturgy and the "for all men" in formula of consecration make it ambiguous whether women really are included in the worshipping community. When it comes to male imagery for God, even so sophisticated a scholar as John McKenzie can be led astray He writes, "There was no sex in the God the Hebrews worshipped. God is, of course, masculine, but not in the sense of sexual distinction." Of course ! ! !

8. *A commitment to end male ascendancy in society and religion.* Here feminists differ A minority favour female ascendancy either as a temporary or a permanent measure. Others, and I identify with this group, while affirming the need for some degree of separatism (i.e., all-female groups) as a temporary measure, are searching for a fully inclusive humanity in which neither women nor men would be relegated to a secondary status.

9. *A critique of Christianity* — the texts of the Old and New Testaments, the theology, structures and practices of the Churches — *as patriarchal, sexist and misogynist.* Revelation has been received into a human culture and has been deeply coloured by the prejudices of that culture. Theology in the West has been mainly the work of white, upper class males; therefore it has been formulated in ignorance

of the experience of the greater part of humanity. I think all feminist theologians would agree with Simone de Beauvoir that Christianity has contributed no little to the oppression of women. However, they disagree over whether this sad condition can be corrected. Some find Christianity irredeemably patriarchal and determine to strike out on new paths out of their conviction that religion is a deeply meaningful and necessary aspect of human life. Others do not think that we can construct a religion *de novo*, out of whole cloth so to speak, and look for positive elements in the tradition.

10. *Rejection of a hierarchical view of the universe.* The chain of being — with God at the top, then angels, men, women, children, animals, plants, down to matter at the bottom — not only legitimatizes a chain of command; it is not an accurate way of viewing our relation to the rest of the universe. Plants and animals can get along without us; we cannot get along without them. Our experiences with pollution, DDT in the food chain, acid rain, depletion of the ozone layer by aerosol sprays — might give us pause and lead us to image the universe as a great inter-connected web in which everything affects everything else.

11. *Rejection of the dualism of mind/body, spirit/matter.* From both Greek and Christian thought, we inherit a series of dualistic equations which derive from the hierarchical view of the universe: God is to creation as spirit to matter, as mind to body, as reason to emotion, as higher to lower, as male to female. The father in heaven is used to legitimatize the domination of the fathers on earth. Moreover, those on the higher side of the above equations not only rule over the lower but tend to demonize them as seductive, sinful and defiling. Hence, the myths of female evil mentioned above.

Feminist theologians give particular attention to the mind/body dualism which splits feelings from thinking and exalts an abstract, bodiless rationality as the height of "objectivity", regarding the body either as a tool or as a dangerous alien force to be brought into subjection. They point out that the mind/body split has led either to angelism, an identification of the good life with escape from the body and its processes, or to libertinism which makes the body a tool of sensuality. Feminists are searching for wholeness, for an understanding of the self as embodied, for an integration of thought and feeling, activity and receptivity, intuition and logic.

12. *Rejection of dominance/submission as a model of human relationships in favour of mutuality* and inclusive community. Christianity has held up a narrow range of roles to women — either virginity or, as second

best, marriage and motherhood. Women have been exhorted to obedience and self-sacrifice in ways that have prevented them from becoming mature adults and achieving authentic spiritual growth. Only those who have taken possession of their lives can have a self to give in authentic love. The typical female failings are not pride and lust for power but rather timidity, self-effacement and evasion of responsibility. The feminist vision of relationships is not a reversal of the old top dog/under dog model. Rather it is a vision of mature persons, each one being both competent and compassionate, strong and vulnerable, and able to sustain mutual relations of giving and receiving.

This list by no means exhausts the characteristics of feminist theology. The spirit is moving in the women's movement; feminist theologians are bearing gift of grace for the Churches. Will the Churches, will the men of the Churches, be able to listen and to learn ?

Sin and Morality in Feminist Perspective

Regina COLL, C.S.J.*

THEOLOGY as we know it today is incomplete; not only because God is still acting in our world and we must continue to contemplate that action and strive to understand it, but also because the theology which we enjoy is, for the most part, the result of the endeavour of only a small proportion of humankind. Our Christian theology has been constructed by white western males, usually well educated and economically secure. It therefore reflects only their world view. They cannot speak for others.

We are only now beginning to turn our attention to the experience of God in the poor and oppressed. We have yet to seriously turn an attentive ear to the experience of God in women's lives. Theology is not the only incomplete knowledge which we posess. Our theories of psychology, anthropology and sociology, for instance, also reflect the ideology and values of dominant peoples. Women have only recently found their voices and are beginning to take responsibility of speaking their own words. What is still necessary is for these words to be heard and heeded.

Traditional theology is inadequate to describe God's action in the lives of women; it is also inadequate to describe the presence of evil in women's lives. It is this question of evil which we will investigate here. Christian vocabulary describing sin illustrates the inordinate attention that has been paid to sin in our tradition. We speak of actual sin and original sin, mortal and venial sin; sins of omission and sins of commission; there are occasions of sin and capital sins, sins in thought, word and deed. We even provided manuals for confessors so that they might judge the seriousness of the sins confessed according to number and kind.

As children we learned that we sin because we are sinners, but the Jewish concept of sin suggests that we are sinners because we sin.

---

*Dr Regina COLL is Professor on Feminist Theology at Catholic University, Washington, and editor of *Women and Religion*, a Reader for the Clergy. Early this year she has been lecturing in India.

The subtleness of that distinction has been lost to us Christians. The Biblical notion of sin, still held by the Jewish Community, is "to miss the mark". When someone shoots an arrow at a target and misses, the presumption is that there was at least some minimal effort to hit the target This metaphor certainly provides a different image of sin from the traditional Christian one. When sin is mentioned in the Gospels, it is almost always mentioned in terms of forgiveness and repentence. We read that there is joy in heaven at the sinner's return.

Over the course of the centuries, sin has become almost synonymous with sex To call someone a sinner is not to suggest that they are unjust or dishonest but to suggest that they have broken the laws regarding sexuality. The close association which has been made between women and the body has linked women with sexual sins and has left us with teachings vilifying women's role in bringing down men.

St Ambrose has told us that "Adam was led to sin by Eve not Eve by Adam. It is just and right that women accept as lord and master whom she led to sin" Similarly St Clement admonishes women that they should "blush with shame when you think of what nature you are". Even the great Thomas Aquinas defined women as other — and lesser:

> The woman together with her husband is the image of God so that the whole substance may be one image, but when she is referred to separately in her quality of helpmate, which regards woman alone, then she is not in the image of God, but as regards man alone, he is the image of God as fully and completely as when woman too is joined with him in one

With such a history it is no wonder that the Vatican Declaration on the question of the Admission of Women to the Ministerial Priesthood could state that, since St Thomas required that sacramental signs represent what they signify by natural resemblance,

> When Christ's role in Eucharist is to be expressed sacramentally, there would not be this 'natural resemblance' which must exist between Christ and his minister if the role of Christ were not taken by a man; in such a case it would be difficult to see in the minister the image of Christ. For Christ himself was and remains a man (no. 5).

Privatized Sin

In the course of history, we have privatized and domesticated sin just as we have privatized and domesticated virtues. We forget that Jesus was not crucified for telling people to be kind to their neighbours or to be obedient and gentle. Jesus was crucified because he called attention to the evils which infected his society. He put the spot-light on the oppressive exploitation of the poor by government officials and religious leaders. Even as we can observe today,

powerful people of this time used their authority to manipulate and exploit the lowly. We forgot that concept of sin and focused our attention on the individual and private aspects of sin. When Christians examined their consciences they checked off whether or not they had been unkind or dishonest in dealing with others; whether they had sinned sexually in thought, word or deed (and in fact often by the time an act was performed the sin was often multiplied because it had been entertained in thought and it had been spoken of). We became expert at listing the many personal and private sins of daily life.

Systemic Sin

But we neglected to focus our attention on the sin which infects the very structures of our society; we failed to recognize that our structures, institutions and systems are maintained for the benefit of the few and the mighty at the expense of the many and the powerless. Karl Rahner warns us that "The danger of debasing Christianity by confining the struggle with sin to the wholly private sphere is immanent and menacing." We do not deny that we sin as individuals but we must recognize our involvement in a society which creates and tolerates inhuman conditions. We must, as Paul admonishes, "test everything, hold fast that which is good" (2 Thes 5: 21).

As Christians, we are responsible for governments which exploit people; we need to examine those "isms" which grow like cancers in our world — communism, capitalism, consumerism, racism, sexism. . .

Most Christians have begun to perceive racism, whether on a national scale or an individual one, as sinful. The belief that race is the primary determinant of human traits and capabilities and that racial differences produce an inherent superiority of one race over another has been recognized as not only erroneous but also as evil. This is not to suggest that racism is dead; it merely suggests that thinking people can no longer rationalize their racist prejudices.

It is not so widely recognized that sexism is also a sin; that it is wrong to take sex as the primary determinant of human traits and capabilities; that the belief that sexual differences produce an inherent superiority of one sex over another is the basis of a pervasive evil in our world.

Women and men alike may be guilty of the sin of sexism. It is the structure, the system which is sinful. Perceiving women to be lesser denies that God's creation is good and militates against women growing to full humanity.

An example of systemic sin may be helpful here. Slavery was sinful, not because masters abused the slaves, but because the very structure of a society based on slavery was sinful. Some masters may have seen to the welfare of the slaves and treated them gently; some few even educated slaves. It was not the harshness or kindness of the treatment of the slaves that determined slavery's sinfulness. The owning of another human being, made in God's image, in itself, is what was sinful.

Sometimes women collude in their own oppression by maintaining institutions which foster the inherent superiority of men. This is becoming a serious problem for some Christian feminists who love the Church but who yet see some structures of the institutional Church being used to keep women in a position of inferiority and yet, the problem here is not one which can be solved by the men in the Church. For, as Pearl Drego reminded:

> I do not encourage you, men, to be benevolent or generous towards women. This will only make them grateful to you and even more dependent on you in their gratitude. Such generosity will postpone the revolution that is to come. And come it will, whether you like it or not My message to you is not to do anything for the women in the Church because the movement has to come from, and be carried forward by, women themselves and not by men. What I do ask from you is to understand what is already taking place so that you be not afraid that the ground is being shaken from beneath your feet, that you recognise the action of God in women's history, rather 'her story', that you cheer from the sidelines and put your authority on the side of justice, feminine justice [1]

Once a person becomes aware of the sinfulness of a situation, there is only one solution — and that is to overcome the evil in one's own life and in the life of the institution involved. The statement of the 1971 Synod of Bishops, that action on behalf of justice and toward the transformation of the world is a constitutive dimension of the Gospel, demands no less.

Personal Sin

This discussion of systemic sin should not leave us with the idea that feminists have eliminated the concept of individual sin. That concept is, however, different from the traditional one. Two developments in particular have contributed to our questioning of what is sinful and what is not.

The first of these is the soul-searching which has gone on among theologians, especially German theologians, about the part that Christians played in making it possible for Hitler to systematically extermi-

1. Pearl DREGO, "Women in the Church", VIDYAJYOTI 1981, p. 383.

nate six million Jews. Dorothee Soelle asks, in the light of Nuremburg Trials of the Nazis: "Is it possible that Christian training in obedience can be, even partially, responsible for the good conscience of the bureaucratic murderer ?"[2] One after the other, she reminds us, Nazis claimed their own innocence because they were only following orders, doing as they were told. The overwhelming evil in the structure of society opened our eyes to systemic sin and caused us to reclaim, in a radical way, the long-standing Christian concept of the primacy of one's conscience. Obedience, especially blind obedience, to superiors no longer holds the esteemed place in the hierarchy of virtues. Christians today are less likely to ask Father or Sister for the right answer.

The second phenomenon which has contributed to the feminist consciousness of sin is the progress that has been made in the sociological and psychological sciences. While these secular sciences have made an impact on the work of all moral theologians and ethicists, the work done by feminist scholars in this area has been quite revolutionary.

The question of sin from a feminist perspective was first raised by Valerie Saving Goldstein[3] when she investigated whether sin as traditionally defined really describes women's situation. Since women have not had the opportunity to develop a healthy pride and self-image, it is most unlikely that they would have developed these to a sinful degree. The sins of women might be better described as triviality, lack of focus, dependence on others for one's self-definition, mistrust of reason, inability to respect the boundaries of privacy and sentimentality.

But these are the very qualities that society has assigned to women. Psychological studies such as those undertaken by Inge Broverman and Sandra and Daryl Bem indicate that both men and women describe women in terms very similar to those listed above. They are also the qualities dominated people interiorize. They not only define themselves in terms of the dominator but they also share the dominator's negative views and feelings towards themselves. The dominators live within the dominated and name them. People who are among the subordinates accept the dominant view of them and that view becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Judith Plaskow contributed to the discussion in her investigation of the definitions of sin offered by Niebuhr and Tillich. Niebuhr main-

2. *Beyond Mere Obedience*, 9.
3. "The Human Situation: A Feminist Viewpoint".

tained that, since the root sin was pride, grace could be described as a crucifixion of the sinful self. According to Plaskow:

> The shattering of the self from beyond is received as grace only where the self's sin is pride and self-absorption. Where sin is not 'too much' self but lack of self, such shattering is at least irrelevant and possibly destructive rather than healing . Where sin is not the attempt to take everything on the self, but the failure to take responsibility, the failure to become a self, pardon addressed to the prideful self has less meaning

Women's sin, then, may be an underdevelopment of one's humanity. It is a denial of our ontological vocation, that call to be fully human by virtue of the fact that we exist. Because we are, we are called to be all that we might be.

Sin has both a personal and a systemic dimension. It is the distortion of a relationship whether with God, with others or with oneself.

Moral Development

Closely associated with the discussion of sin is the question of how human beings develop a sence of morality. Lawrence Kohlberg, a pioneer in the field, constructed a six stage theory of moral development which represents a growth from egocentric through societal to universal ethical conception; decisions at each succeeding level being made first from the perspective of individual needs, then from social conventions, rules and laws, and finally from principles of justice which have universal applicability.[5]

It is important to note here that all of Kohlberg's subjects were male; women played no part in the establishment of his six stages. The centrality of societal conventions in Kohlberg's scheme led Carol Gilligan to write that "[Kohlberg denotes] the major shifts in moral perspectives around a centre of moral understanding that equates justice with the maintenance of existing social systems."[6] His model unquestioningly accepts the validity of the status quo.

Gilligan, on the other hand, questions the appropriateness of a moral system that does not take interpersonal relationships more into consideration. Having shifted her paradigm from a patriarchal one to a feminist one, she sees the world through a different lens. Her perceptions forced her to question a system in which morality, law and order, convention and justice have been so closely aligned as to shut out such considerations as care and non-violence. When a

4. *Sex, Sin and Grace*, pp. 85-86.
5. Lawrence KOHLBERG and R. KRAMER, "Continuities and Discontinuities in Childhood and Adult Moral Development", *Human Development* 1969, pp. 93-120.
6. Carol GILLIGAN, "In a Different Voice: Women's Conceptions of Self and Morality", *Harvard Educational Review* 1977, p. 489.

different standard of measure is used, she discovered, these considerations take on greater significance. She uncovered, in her work with women, "a distinct moral language".[7] In which the solution to a moral dilemma is defined in terms of care. Words like "selfishness" and "responsibility" loomed large. For these conceptions, the moral problem "is seen to arise from conflicting responsibilities rather than from competing rights and to require for its resolution a mode of thinking that is contextual and inductive rather than formal and abstract."[8]

It was this contextual and inductive thinking, in part, that led Kohlberg to determine that most women fit into his pattern at level three. He explained that, since women's lives were restricted to interpersonal and familial patterns, this stage was adequate for resolving the moral conflicts which they faced. They were perceived in this, as in other male-oriented schemes, to be somewhat inferior, somewhat lacking. This judgement echoed Freud's famous claim that "women have less sense of justice than men, that they are less ready to submit to the great emergencies of life, that they are more often influenced in their judgments by feelings of affection and hostility."[9]

Gilligan's stages moved from the ego-centric to the universal moral perspective but the terms of the movement are different. She describes a movement from a first level of selfishness, in which the self is the sole object of concern, through a transition where the recognition of selfishness and responsibility first appear.

A woman at the second level accepts society's view of the "good woman" as one who sacrifices her whole being for the sake of others. At this level real moral responsibility is avoided since a woman's goodness is measured by her fulfilling another's needs. This second stage mitigates the responsibility of the woman since what she chooses to do is to follow the wishes of another; it is a subtle way of avoiding responsibility.

The second transition is a movement from this erroneous concept of goodness to one that is more honest. The morality of an action is judged in terms of intentions and consequences, and the woman begins to question whether her needs ought also be included in her deliberations. The conventions of feminine self-sacrifice are rejected because

---

7. Carol GILLIGAN, "Women's Place in Man's Life Cycle", *Harvard Educational Review* 1979, p 442.
8. Carol GILLIGAN, "Women's Place in Man's Life Cycle", *Harvard Educational Review* 1979, p. 442.
9. "Some Psychological Differences", in *The Collected Papers of Sigmund Freud*, edited by James STRACHEY, pp. 257-258.

of their power to hurt, not only the women themselves but husbands and parents and children who feel manipulated and guilty because of the self-sacrifice.

Gilligan's final level is the level of the morality of non-violence. The conventions of feminine self-sacrifice are rejected because of their power to hurt; care becomes the universal obligation and women themselves are included in the caring process. There is a recognition that moral problems, by their very nature, involve violence, to self or to others. The moral decision here is the one which inflicts the least violence. It is not automatically assumed that if there is to be suffering, it must be the woman who suffers.

The inclusion of so-called feminine elements of care, concern and a preferential option for non-violence in the process of moral decision-making might be able to raise our moral standards to a more human level.

Conclusion

The essay began by suggesting that theology, like other kinds of knowledge, is incomplete. When the experience and reflections of subordinated peoples is finally included, we will be able to say not so much that we have a completed theology but at least that we have a theology which is less inadequate.

Woman in Hindi Film

Rita MONTEIRO*

THIS article is an attempt to analyse the manner in which women are depicted in Hindi films, from 1960 to the present day with a view to understanding the possible effects this will have on viewers, both male and female. Indians learn basic lessons about social life from films just as hundreds of years ago, illiterate peasants did by studying the carvings in temples. As Harold Lasswell pointed out, today's mass media have replaced yesterday's cathedrals, parish churches, temples and schools as teachers of the young and of the masses. Our society, like any other society, must pass on its social heritage from one generation to another. The need to transmit traditional values and maintain the stability of society is especially felt at periods of rapid social change such as ours. However, nothing can remain static; there must be change, if stagnancy is not to set in. Therefore, society should also prepare itself to meet changing conditions. Nowhere is that need as readily identifiable as in the area of *sex roles* — sex roles are social guidelines for sex-appropriate appearance, interests, skills, behaviour and self-perceptions. It is in this area, in the past few decades, where social expectations and social conditions have been changing most rapidly. It is necessary therefore to see whether films influence these changes, or act as a regressive influence, presenting images of women and their relationships to men and society at large which reinforce patterns of living that keep women in a subservient position.

Socializing Role of Film

What are Hindi films telling us about the way men and women should behave ? How women should treat men ? How women should view themselves ? What do these films view as the best way for a woman to structure her life ? What do they tell a little girl to hope for, or expect, when she becomes a woman ?

We must be aware that formula Hindi films have been extended to a very wide audience, and they are the most popular programme

*Mrs Rita MONTEIRO is a teacher and journalist. She gives lectures on women to the clergy and religious.

on T.V., as the following figures given in Doordarshan's T.V. Audience Survey will show.

	Bombay	Delhi	Calcutta
Formula Film	81%	84%	73%
Phool Khilen Hain Gulshan Gulshan	83%	68%	
Chitrahaar/Chhayageet	86%	84%	81%

In addition to the T.V. audience for these films, we must consider the Video Boom *India Today* (30-6-1983) comments that informal guesses put the total number of Video sets in the country at close to 3 lakhs; and that number is growing by 20,000 every month. Watching films on T.V. or Video is becoming increasingly popular, as entertainment to pass time. Women and young girls form a sizeable part of the audience for these films We should also become aware that a significant cross-section of the younger generation of Christian women also watch these films with lively interest To this we must add the fact that in India opportunities for other forms of informal education, entertainment and relaxation, such as easy accessibility to well-stocked libraries, sports and hobbies, are severely limited, and especially so for women and girls. A film is the cheapest and most easily available amusement.

Films do act as socializing institutions, reflecting certain norms of society and at the same time reinforcing values which might be current at the time. Films could then act as a means to help women think about their problems and find solutions to them. But the portrayal of women in commercial Hindi cinema shows no genuine progress. It fails to present women in any constructive or analytical way. This is a crucial social problem, because as Lasswell points out, in a complex society such as ours, the mass media pass on news from one segment of society, from one class, region and subculture to another. Additionally, they enable institutions in society to co-ordinate activities. Like the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages, "that great broadcasting centre of medieval Europe" (Baumann), the mass media can disseminate the same message to all classes at the same time, with authority and universality of reception, in a decidedly one-directional flow of information.

Suppose that girls in the film audience "model" their beheviour and expectations on that of cinema women. Such a supposition is quite plausible, for what psychologists call "modelling" occurs simply

by watching others, without any direct reinforcement of learning and without any overt practice. The child imitates the model, without being induced or compelled to do so. That learning can occur in the absence of direct reinforcement is a radical departure from earlier theories, that regarded reward and punishment as indispensable to learning. There now is considerable evidence that children do learn by watching and listening to others, even in the absence of reinforcement and overt practice. Psychologists have noted that opportunities for modelling have been vastly increased by television. It is then equally plausible that women and girls, exposed to the formula Hindi film, will continue to accept the rules of sex stereotypes to guide their behaviour, the setting of their life goals and ways of living out these goals. Let us see what sort of models of feminine nature and character are presented by the average Hindi film.

Diminished Creatures

The majority of heroines are young, the emphasis being on their shapely figures which are seductively revealed by provocative cholis, hipster saris, and ways of draping the sari to reveal as much as possible while still concealing. A woman's status is not evaluated by what she achieves, but is judged by her looks. Therefore, few screen heroines are educated, or hold professional jobs. At most they might be teachers or clerks. Since the films are often set in rural and tribal backgrounds, the whole setting is romanticized, with little relevance to the grim hard work which faces most women in rural areas. The sexually stimulating rural costumes have very little actual basis. The traditional Gunghat (*purdah*) is used not only as a sign of women's subordination, but also to highlight women's coyness and beauty.

Most of the women are depicted as housewifes, often remaining in the background, or covering their heads with the sari as a symbol of their self-effacement and obedience, while the male stars strut around, dominating the action. Even as housewives or mothers, they are never depicted as strong, independent, decisive characters, who within the family make themselves responsible for the maintenance of values and principles. Never are women depicted as leaders in moments of crisis. Instead, they are weak sentimental creatures, who coddle and worship their sons, who can easily pull the wool over their adoring eyes. When problems arise, they can be counted on to become hysterical, weeping jelly-fish, without the backbone to support a sister or daughter who might be in trouble. Often they are arrogant, conscious of their social status, spiteful, jealous and plain stupid.

If the woman is supposed to be admired, then the film maker preaches her self-effacement and devotion, which in themselves are certainly virtues, but, when combined with implied and blatant criticism of women who opt for a more liberated life style, become lethal, especially since feminine independence is shown as resulting in immoral behaviour, not in personal development and responsibility. The conclusion one draws is: dependent women are virtuous and feminine, independent women are immoral.

Dominant Indian values serve as resources for the themes of these films, such as respect for elders, sacrifices made by women for the family, within which framework the subordinate position of women vis-à-vis men, is reinforced Women are shown as the appendages of men, utterly incapable of holding any opinion. It is around the hero that the dominant action of the film revolves. The Indian woman on the screen is modelled on the traits of great mythological characters like Sita, who is spite of being treated unjustly by Rama, makes no complaints and in the end pardons her husband; or Savithri who so put her husband at the centre of her life that without him life had no meaning at all a rather extreme way of looking at life from the woman's point of view

In the film "Oh Bewaffa" (Disloyal), the wife of the unfaithful husband is addressed by a well-wisher, who himself has a concubine, in this manner: "As she circles the fire seven times during her marriage, behind her husband, every Hindu woman vows to follow him wherever he goes, whatever he does. Only at the last moment, does she step in front of him. This implies that when death comes, she will go first." Another film pronounces a wife as a glorified Naukar (servant) and tells the husband that he should not forget this ! In a recent film of hit parade songs from 1950-1980, based on a dozen films, not a single one contained a projection of woman which showed her possessing dignity, identity or individuality; nor did any of the films expose the many social evils which corrode the lives of women.

These are indeed reflections of the lives of diminished creatures, images of Indian women which waver between true-to-life happenings and symbolic representations of the roles of men and women which are approved of by society.

Symbolic Annihilation of Women

Commonsense will now tell us that films which trivialize women as sexual objects, or as child-like delicate adornments who need to be protected, or which condemn strong, independent women as immoral,

achieve "the symbolic annihilation of women", to use a telling phrase of George Gerber. Women can be symbolically annihilated by being portrayed as incompetent, or as inferior to the male star who has the main role, or rescued from dangerous and bad situations by males. When women are involved in violence, unlike males they are more likely to be victims than aggressors. Moreover, single women are more likely to be victims of violence than married women, and working women are more likely to be villains than housewives. This portrayal of women is made even more disturbing by a trend which has accelerated from the 60s and 70s to the present day, to emphasize women as a sex object. Every possible trick is explored to titillate the audience sexually and get away with it at the Censor Board. Playback songs with double meaning, sexual insinuations, leave nothing to the imagination. Cabaret items, or song and dance sequences by women stars who are labelled vamps, are crudely licentious.

No bones are made by the directors of these films, that these interludes are specifically meant to stimulate the men in the audience. This crudely erotic depiction of women is linked with orgasmic gestures and sequences which are becoming increasingly violent. These violent episodes give an opportunity for the male star to exhibit and celebrate his male power. Violence against, and sexual exploitation of women in Hindi films, has been escalated to intolerable levels, often leading to explicit scenes of rape. So harrowing are these scenes, that many people have begun to protest against them. Women's organizations particularly have pointed out that films such as these make women in real life the natural targets of violence and rape. A film like "Insaf Ka Tarazu" has a detailed preparation for a rape "fit to make a voyeur slaver" (Iqbal Masud). But it got past the Censor Board on the grounds that it was a crusade against rape of women !

We may now ask ourselves what is the worth of such models for the women and girls who watch this systematic destruction of the person of woman ? To ask the question, what do man learn of how to treat women, is almost obscene.

Glimmers of Hope

Indeed, the situation as to the manner in which women are depicted in Hindi cinema would be completely bleak, but for a few exceptional films made in the past few years, which centre on women and reflect the growing strength of the Indian woman in real life, her changing roles and more productive life-style. This trend has been made possible by a new breed of directors who look at women as

multi-dimensional characters, faced with problems, which they attempt to solve by their own initiative and ability. Two exceptionally strong, gifted, intelligent actresses, Shabana Azimi and Smita Patil, have made their portrayals unforgettable and credible. So rare are such films that they deserve explicit mention.

In "Aarth" and "Yeh Nazdeekiyan", Shabana plays the role of the cultured, poised, attractive wife, who has a mutually meaningful and sexually satisfying relationship with her husband, until the other woman comes on the scene At first, she strives to win back her husband, but when she realizes that his fixation is serious, she makes the agonizing decision to begin life all over again, alone, as a single woman, rather than compromize with her personal dignity by accepting her husband's proposal that she stay on and accept the situation. In this process of having to stand on her own feet, she finds not only tranquillity but a new assurance and self-confidence, while her creative talents, lying dormant till then, unfold as she meets new challenges. The message here is, that not only can woman do without man, but that opportunities for self-realization are always there, waiting to be explored. By winning a national film award for her performance in "Aarth", Shabana has given a blossoming prestige to depicting women with this new dignity.

Smita Patil with her smouldering eyes, mobile face and self-contained independent personality, projects the image of the eternal woman, who directs her own life, willing to pay a price for the decisions she makes, with gallant courage. Whether she plays the role of a slum woman as in "Chakra", a famous movie star as in "Bhumika", an upper class, educated housewife yearning to discover herself in "Subah", or an ordinary peasant woman as in "Manthan" and "Bhavani Bhavai", Smita Patil establishes an egalitarian relationship with her male co-stars, and often outstrips them in the projection of herself as a person.

Two other recent films, which attempt with some degree of honesty to project the humiliations which a double standard of morality and ignominious customs heap on women, are "Mujhe Insaf Chahiye" and "Shubh Kamna". Rati Agnihotri is the heroine in both films. While conforming initially to the image of the traditional heroine of Hindi films, she breaks out of this mould early enough in both films, to become a convincing challenger of current social norms. In the former film, a spirited attack is made of the idea that woman alone must bear the responsibility, guilt and shame of an illegitimate child. Supported by a famous woman lawyer, played by Rekha, Rati wins her

case in court that her unborn child will bear the name of the man who fathered it. Thereafter, she assumes sole responsibility for bringing up her son, the boy proving himself early as possessed of extraordinary abilities.

"Shubh Kamna" attacks the system of dowry and the extortionate tactics used by the parents of the young man seeking marriage. Rati Agnihotri, a lecturer in economics, refuses to permit her parents to be harassed by the demand for a ridiculously high dowry and courageously speaks out against this vile custom. Later she falls in love with and finally marries, Rakesh Roshan, who acts the part of a waiter, an educated, chivalrous gentleman who has qualities much above his status in life. In the choice of a marriage partner, it is respect, consideration and genuine feelings which count, not social position.

Despite their obvious flaws, these last two films deserve special mention because, though basically their structure is that of the popular film, a sincere attempt has been made to portray women and their problems sympathetically. They do get the message across, that unless a woman has the guts to stand up for her rights, even at the cost of her initial censure by society, she will not be treated as a human being who must be judged by the same norms, as man is.

Towards Positive Images of Women

For the future, what chances are there that Hindi films will portray multi-dimensional women, instead of rigidly categorized types ? The popularity of the new kinds of films on women must have come as a surprise and will certainly make other producers and directors sit up. They are concerned with creating products that will sell and, if women's liberation can be profitable, well why not tailor films to meet this requirement ?

However, experience from other countries shows that unless women become involved in all creative aspects of the commercial film, distorted portrayals of women will continue. Even the best creations of women are seen from a male perspective since film has become essentially the product of a single creative personality, the usually male director/author. Therefore, it is essential that women be trained as camera-persons, directors, music and sound technicians, and script writers. But even the presence of women in the technical aspects of film making, or focusing on women's problems, will not guarantee a more accurate depiction. In the first place, the portrayal of women will not change until social consciousness about, and social conditions for women have improved. In this regard, women's organizations

and all institutions responsible for the education and welfare of women, can do a great deal by way of conscientizing women and girls about the need to protest against all forms of exploitation, including that of the cinema.

Secondly, in focusing on women, it is essential to show that the female personality is related to woman's experiences as a member of a particular social class in society The true potential of women can only be revealed if their psychology is related to the structure of society which conditions them into believing they are inferior.

Continued from p. 164

exegetes between biblical faith and its post-biblical enunciation is thoroughly investigated and verified in the volume under review, entitled "Jesus Christ and the Church's Tradition"

The author, himself a Christologist and ecumenical theologian of renown, first reviews the pre-Nicene Christological developments, he then passes on to the Christological Councils, Nicea, Ephesus, Chalcedon, Constantinople II and III, ending with an overview of the more recent tradition down to Vatican II. His preoccupation is to show what is of lasting value in the traditional formulations, in particular what bearing the dogmatic definitions of the councils still have in the present Christological debate. To this end the historical context of each document is analyzed and its precise significance explained. While claiming lasting significance for traditional enunciations, the author is also aware of their unavoidable space and time conditioning. Nor does he overlook the relative character of Christological pronouncements made by the Church, subservient as they are by nature to the N. T. Christological faith.

The last part of the book is a Christological essay in which the author tries to convey the mystery of Jesus Christ in a way which, while subsuming the Biblical and traditional data, also takes into account the present problematic. The identity of Jesus is not to be divorced from Jesus' own history nor is faith in him ahistorical, but rather a process.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

New Canon Law

The Code of Canon Law. *Bangalore, Theological Publications in India,* 1983. Pp. xv-316 Rs 18

Theological Publications in India must be thanked for the speedy Indian edition (in collaboration with Collins, London) of the New Code of Canon Law in English translation The new Code came into force on the first Sunday of Advent, 1983, by which date this edition was already available. The English translation was prepared by the Canon Law Societies of Great Britian and Ireland, in association with those of Australia, New Zealand and Canada. It has been approved by the Indian episcopal conference for use in the country. Its low cost notwithstanding, the volume is handy and elegant. Thanks to it, priests, especially those in the pastoral ministy, can now familiarise themselves with the new Church law announced by Pope John XXIII as early as 1959, but which has been twenty years in the making. The only draw-back of the present edition is the essence of an analytical index. The original Latin edition, published by the Vatican early in 1983, contained no such index. It will be left for further editions to include in English analytical index whenever available.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

Women Religious in Rural Ministry

F.C. RODRIGUES, S.J.*

UP to a few years ago the majority of our religious were confined to the urban areas conducting schools, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable institutions. In the predominantly mission areas, like Chota Nagpur and other Tribal areas, the men missionaries were assisted in a big way by women religious. They looked after the interests of women in close collaboration or, more often, under the direction of the missionary. But though their convents were located in the rural areas they lived in well established convents, living a regular convent life. No one would even consider spending the night outside a convent. The male missionaries had often to live in the villages as guests of the villagers, sharing, to a certain extent, their life style. Whenever a Christian community was established, both men and women missionaries established their own houses.

In those days it was possible for a missionary to go into a rural area and preach the Christian message and make converts. Today it is not that easy. In most places missionaries are not welcome. There are militant Hindu revivalists who oppose us and often, violently. The Government too frowns upon all sorts of conversion work. Propagation of one's faith is guaranteed by the Indian Constitution but in practice serious problems are created for the missionary.

As long as Christ's command to preach the Good News to all mankind remains, we cannot shrink from our duty. In recent years the Spirit seems to have shown us a new path to reach the rural millions who do not know Christ. A small number of religious, mostly women, and mostly relatively young ones, have started a daring experiment, which is still looked upon with suspicion by those in authority and that because it does not conform to established norms of living the religious life. The success achieved by these pioneers is astounding.

In 1979 the Conference of the Major Superiors of India, of men and women religious, at their annual meeting spent a whole day studying this new thrust in the work of evangelisation. Many were convinced that here was a new path to reach the hearts of the rural millions, as much as 80% of the population of the country.

Modus Operandi

A small group of religious, three or four, go to a village and settle down there either in a rented house or one put at their disposal by the

*Fr F. C. RODRIGUES, S.J., was till recently National Secretary, CRI.

villagers themselves It is an ordinary village hut. They adopt the villagers' life style to the maximum extent possible in the way they live, eat and dress, keeping their religious habit, mostly the Indian saree but worn in the way the Sannyasis wear it. They adopt the diet of the villagers but, taught by experience and also urged by the villagers themselves, they prepare their food themselves. In a few cases these workers have constructed their own houses but similar to the houses of the villagers, simple and affording minimum facilities. The only facility they all want is their own bath rooms since the normal custom of the people is to bathe at the public well. They also provide for their own sanitary facilities. The villagers do not object to this or show any sort of displeasure but urge the workers to have better facilities than they have and are used to One group has built a "convent" costing Rs 20,000 when the minimum cost of an ordinary regular convent is Rs 150,000.

What do they do ? They are available to the people round the clock Every one is welcome to walk in and walk out of their little house They are accepted by the people, though not right from the beginning Within a short time they are accepted fully by the villagers and treated like their own and a lot of affection is given them. The workers do not preach the Good News directly but indirectly by their lives, by their love for the people, and by rendering to them whatever service they can. They provide simple medical care when needed, they teach children, they teach the adults home science, child care, preventive medicine, they pray together with them and above all they listen to their joys and sorrows It does not take long for these simple villagers to realize that these new friends of theirs are ascetics who have given up all for the love of God to serve their fellow men and women. They silently give witness to the message of love — so clearly brought out in the parable of the good Samaritan -- of Christ, the good Shepherd, the lover of children and the friend of the poor and oppressed. Their readiness to help by deed and word endears them to these villagers and makes a deep impression on them.

Life in the village homes is by no means a cosy one. Even the basic amenities obtainable in a convent are not available here. These village homes are open houses where any one can come in at any time. Since most people are out in the fields or jungles working during the day, the most convenient time for the people to visit their "friends" is during the night. They seldom go to sleep before midnight and often later. Their houses are so simple that privacy is a luxury which they cannot afford. One group has a room 18 feet by 12 feet which is chapel, dormitory, dining room, meeting room and "parlour". They themselves take turns in cooking their simple meals. Most of them get Mass once or twice a week when a priest from a neighbouring station comes. They have to find time to pray and do their spiritual exercises. It has been noticed that these village workers, having realized the need to be close to the Master, have deepened their religious commitment to Christ. Defections from among these groups are rare, if any. Their toughness is easily discernable. They pray and make time for it.

All the groups have realized that they must have a few days break from this work, away from the village for rest and silent reflection, and a bit of community life. This is essential for all these workers for their physical and spiritual welfare.

Who meets their expenses ? They have no income in the villages since they are not occupied in income generating work. Their superiors have to look after them. In some cases Mission-aid agencies have been very generous in giving the support they need.

Feeling the need to bring together these workers to give them an opportunity to share their experiences, I asked permission from the National Assembly held in Bangalore in 1982 to organise a consultation.

As a first step I wrote to all the major superiors to give me the addresses of such groups they might have in their Congregation. I stated clearly that what I wanted was the addresses of only those groups who had adopted the village life style by living with the villagers. I clearly excluded all those groups which live in their own convents, even if they be located in the rural areas, and live a normal convent life style with its well established routine. The response was rather disappointing. From the information I got I selected one or two from each group which came nearest to the definition of the "village worker" I had given. Invitations were sent to 24 Sisters and one Brother. It was to be a three day meeting in Bangalore. Only 12 Sisters came. The Brother could not come for reasons beyond his control. Out of the 12 only four were village workers in the strict sense. But since all the twelve were working in the rural areas with farmers and labourers they had much in common. We got a lot of insights from what they had to tell us.

The Consultation

It was held at St Joseph's Convent, Whitefield, near Bangalore. from April 7th to 9th, 1983. It began with a Eucharistic celebration which was simple but touching. These village workers who spend their waking hours with the simple rural folk reflected simplicity, deep devotion and sense of dedication. We were all strangers but we all felt that we were members of a well knit family with a common goal. It was unlike scores of meetings I have attended in my life. Most of the delegates were young in their late twenties or early thirties but, listening to them and observing them, I could see how this hard life had made them mature. What struck me was their deep spirituality, taught them not by books and exhortations but by the vicissitudes of their lives in the circumstances in which they lived and worked and suffered.

After the inaugural Mass we met for an informal session whose main aim was to meet one another. That set the tone for the whole consultation. Mutual sharing was easy thereafter. It became a family gathering where each one shared freely her experiences, her joys and sorrows. I tried to remain in the background and give a helping

hand when needed. That day and the next, 7th and 8th, we spent six hours, in four sessions, sharing experiences and discussing various aspects of the work. On the last day we had one session to sum up all that we had shared. We had the happiness of having with us for a couple of hours on 9th morning, Fr Bernard Pereira, CSSR, a well known and highly knowledgeable missionary. He gave us an excellent talk on the need for the rural apostolate of the type we were discussing, with all its privations and difficulties and the rigours of poverty which is the daily bread of these workers. He told the Sisters bluntly: "Unless we religious go back to genuine religious poverty, we shall all disappear in time to become like so many who have gone without leaving a trace behind." That talk served as an apt finale to the consultation.

There is a vast scope for this type of apostolate in today's India, especially in the rural areas, perticularly in those regions in which the presence of the Church is nil or near nil. The life is tough and meant only for the generous-hearted. The fact is our young religious are far more generous than we think they are. Give them an opportunity and you will be astounded We who live comfortable lives in well established religious houses, with all the amenities at our disposal, amenities which the majority of the people of the country cannot dream of, cannot but admire the courage displayed by these young workers in facing such tough situation in their daily life.

After living in more or less comfortable religious houses to go into a village, settle down there with the simple villagers, mostly illiterate, in houses or rather huts which besides affording some shelter from sunshine and rain afford little else ! One has to see for oneself to realize what utter poverty there is in these villages, and these young Sisters make this their new home One cannot but envy these workers for the call they have received from the Lord.

It does not take them long to realize that spiritual life and spiritual aids are a necessity and not a luxury. They have to do without Mass for days on end. They cannot have set times for prayers and other spiritual exercises to which they were habituated. They must try and find time. All the delegates were unanimous in stating that they feel the need of keeping close to the Lord and they find time or make time at any cost to do their spiritual exercises. What most feel is lack of opportunity to receive the Eucharistic Lord daily. But that very ardent desire gives them a deep consolation and new strength to give themselves to the Lord in spite of the tough life. It was quite clear listening to them that they were a deeply happy and satisfied lot.

All expressed their deep felt need for the presence of the Lord with them. In one or two places the understanding Bishop has allowed them to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in their huts. With the Lord with them they feel strong to carry any burden. They experience a great inner joy when they know that they have him for whom they live and work. But unfortunately some of our Bishops think that permitting the keeping of the Blessed Sacrament in a village hut is degrading the Lord who, incidently, was born in a manger and lived in a carpenter's hut and not in one of our grandiose cathedrals. All the

delegates pleaded very earnestly that we implore our Bishops to give these workers the one luxury they ask for, the presence of the Lord in their huts. They would like to have Mass daily, but with the present shortage of priests it is not easy. Some Bishops have arranged for periodic visits to the villages by a neighbouring priest so that they can have Mass at least once or twice a week. To require these workers to go back to a regular convent and live there for at least three or four days in a week is to show utter lack of understanding of the type of work these workers are doing. Their presence in the village is needed uninterruptedly. Usually there are at least three Sisters in a group. When one has to go for a few days break only one goes and not all the three.

Why so Few in this Apostolate ?

This type of work is something new and we might even venture to say, revolutionary. The very idea of young Sisters living in a village, outside a regularly constituted convent community, with its rigid routine, deprived of the usual spiritual aids like daily Mass and Sacraments, prayer at regular times, is not only astonishing but even frightening. Superiors who are responsible for their charges are, to say the least, nervous. Some of the delegates related how they are permitted to work in the villages the whole day but must be in the convent by 6 p.m. Spending the night outside the convent walls is unthinkable. Then there is the question of basic amenities, food, sanitation, when in close contact with the villagefolk, men and women. No one can brush aside these problems. There is also danger for young women. But by and large there is an ingrained respect for religious men and women in India. The most depraved man would not lay hands on a Sister whom he knows to be a Sister, a woman dedicated to God. In one village where the Sisters live in a hut in the village, placed at their disposal by the villagers themselves, the men have formed a security guard to protect their Sisters. Once even a priest was barred entry till he was rescued by the Sisters ! Our Sisters have gone to the fields to plant and harvest rice crops and none had anything to fear. They rather received extra consideration. I have heard many touching incidents of the concern of the villagers for their Sisters. They practically adopt them as their own and shower upon them affection in abundant measure. Listening to these workers I got the impression that the fear of the superiors is due more to ignorance than knowledge of the actual situation.

More radical thinking is called for from our superiors about this type of ministry. What they are now doing may be excellent but the time has come to reconsider our priorities. Out of the 50,000 Sisters in India scarcely a hundred,—an over-optimistic number—are working in the village apostolate. Scarcely any one is found to send to the villages. Quite a few superiors are smugly, taking comfort in the notion that those of their Sisters who visit villages to do some social and medical work are village workers. They are not. We would advise such to read the CRI Report of the 1979 National Assembly held in Bangalore. We are not in the least insinuating that these good Sisters are not doing excellent work but what we are trying to say is that we are speaking of

a new mode of procedure adopted in recent times, to reach the heart of the rural millions

Another factor we would like to point out is that our village *workers are there not to fight the oppressors on behalf of the helpless oppressed. That angle is not ruled out but our first and foremost* mission is to witness to Christ by our lives, by our love and concern. And this love is given in equal measure to everyone who lives in the village, the rich and poor alike; for we believe that we have to bring the Good Shepherd to every single man, woman and child.

Another point that emerged strongly during the consultation was the need for special training for all those chosen to work in the rural area according to the new pattern Almost all who are at present working in villages are volunteers with no special preparation. They must be given special training not only for their own growth in spirituality in new circumstances, so different from those encountered in regular religious houses, but also to make them more efficient workers. This preparation should start from their earliest years in their religious life. This is a task which should be taken up in earnest by the Hierarchy and the major superiors of men and women religious. We shall be failing in our duty if we fail to see the signs of the times, the finger of the Spirit pointing out a new way to carry the Good News to the rural millions of our country.

Le Christ de Dieu pour Ignace de Loyola By Joseph THOMAS, S J *Paris Desclee*, 1981 Pp 248 (No price given)

That the person of Jesus Christ is at the centre of the religious experience of Ignatius of Loyola and that a consistent Christology underlies his *Spiritual Exercises* has often been stressed by specialists in Ignatian spirituality, among whom H Rahner. The same theme is examined here once more by J Thomas, director of *Christus*, the French review of Jesuit Spirituality Thomas' critical approach, however, partly renews the subject His treatment extends to all the writings of Ignatius, not least to his abundant correspondence as first superior general of the Society of Jesus. Here, as in other sources, Thomas is careful to distinguish what can and must be attributed to Ignatius himself from what bears the mark of others, in particular of Juan de Polanco, his faithful collaborator for the redaction of the *Constitutions* and his secretary. "Ignatius revised by Polanco", Thomas writes, "is a Paulinised version of Ignatius" What is needed is to return to the sole Ignatius, not for the sake of archaeology but to recover the Ignatian charism in its original source Minute analyses of Ignatius' terminology are part of this process of rediscovery.

The effort is rewarding What results from it is that, if less biblically supported by St Paul and theologically articulated than has sometimes been supposed, Ignatius' experience of Christ is no less central and convincing, it is in fact more immediate. Thomas shows convincingly that Ignatius' Christocentrism takes nothing away from the finality of God. The mystery of Christ is the mystery of God himself who in him opens a way for man. Not only is he mediator; he himself is the mediation. Yet, more typical of Ignatius than any theological Christocentrism is his Christocentric praxis, his "way of proceeding" which binds him to the Church of Christ, for the sake of the world, unto the glory of the divine majesty.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

Note

Indian Womanhood Then and Now

In a decade when literature on women is being churned out with increasing tempo, we welcome Jessie Tellis Nayak's diligent collation of "Situations, Efforts, Profiles" of women, the subtitle of her recent book *Indian Womanhood: Then and Now*[1] The book is valuable not so much for its historical research as for its lively picture of the current struggles, problems and glories of real women in today's India.

The "Then" in the title refers mostly to Part I which takes the reader from early history to the present over the span of 26 pages. This is the weakest section of the book, dipping selectively into the usual high points when women flourished and low points when women were degraded. Yet there are a few interesting flashes: Ghosha, the most famous of the twenty-seven Brahmavidinis (women seers) of Vedic times; Gargi and Maitreyi of the Upanishads, outstanding for their philosophical skills; Sanghamitra, the married daughter of Ashoka who was ordained and became a Buddhist missionary; Prabhavati Gupta and Rajysari, the talented princesses who showed their administrative capacities; up to Kasturba Gandhi, who resisted her husband's male chauvinism. Mention is made of outstanding women through the Muslim period, British period, up to the period of independence, concluding with Indira Gandhi.

Part II deals with problems ranging from purdah and dowry to rape and prostitution. Polyandry, child-birth myths and practices, and suicide do not get sufficient importance in this section. The statistical profiles in Chapter 4 provide the context for Dr Tellis-Nayak's discussion of women's problems. Merlyn Lobo Brito's coverage of rape in Chapter 10 brings in the class dimension. Yet scientific conceptual framework for the analysis of women's oppression would have further enriched the materials in this part.

With Part III comes the presentation of women's efforts. Here the book takes on spirit and substance as the mobilization of rural and urban women, of poor and prophetic women, socialist and spiritual women is recorded with names, dates (some addresses), methods of *operation, success stories, consciousness-raising projects, protest marches*, organized opposition, mobile teams, non-formal education, employment for women, rescue and rehabilitation, etc. Through the recording of such concrete details a profile of women's movements in India emerges.

---

1. **Indian Womanhood Then and Now**. Edited by Jessie B Tellis-Nayak. *Indore, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra*, 1983, Pp 303 Rs 35 (hard cover); **Rs. 25 (paper back).**

Part IV of the book gives short historical sketches of great women of India with touching anecdotes, including a story by Ruth Harner and Ann Cummins of a village health worker Lalanbai who slowly gained confidence in herself. Lalanbai's message rings through the whole section: "Just as I and my village (of Punpalgaon) have developed, if the women of India decide together and put their hearts into it, change can happen anywhere."

A series of cartoons, lists of books, magazines and women's organizations at the end open windows for those who are inspired to support the sisterhood of women's voices rising to establish justice and peace for all.

Pearl DREGO

Community for the Handicapped

The Challenge of L'Arche. Introduction and Conclusion by Jean VANIER *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1982 Pp x-276 £6 95

Started 20 years ago "L'Arche", the movement of homes for the handicapped (cf THE CLERGY MONTHLY 1974, p 232; VIDYAJYOTI 1977, pp 95-96, 1980, pp 393-394, 1981, p. 152) has grown in strength and experience It has nearly 60 homes all over the world (4 in India) the addresses of which are given in an Appendix Besides the founder of the movement, J Vanier, 17 other writers closely connected with it reflect on the experience, and their contributions, like those fo Vanier, are rich in Christian insight and sociological significance The book should certainly be read by all persons working with the physically or mentally handicapped But its value goes far beyond any one involved in creating or fostering *Community* will profit much from it, as indeed any one in search of deeper insights into Christian values emerging from a lived experience. For in L'Arche "you move from a world of efficiency and productivity into a world where the essential values are people's relationships and personal presence one to another From a world where everything is to be had here and now, you enter a world where the essential element is time the time required to create personal ties, to win each other's trust, to grow Leaving a society based on individualism and personal success, often won at other people's cost, you discover a community where no one does anything alone. And coming from a world whose essential motive and important yardstick is money, you find yourself in a world where what is essential can only be given free, where money is no more than a means in the service of the community. That other world expects you to be big and strong, and to hide any weakness as something to be ashamed of, whereas here each person's weaknesses are brought to light and shared, and this sharing is the foundation of unity" (pp. 71-72) And yet not all members of L'Arche are Christian this is a very ecumenical movement Some of those who join it are professionally oriented; more are community motivated; perhaps most are religiously inclined None of these values need exclude the others, but all may not be found in all members. But the importance of the experiment which, notwithstanding its vulnerability and undoubted problems, seems a success, is that it offers "an alternative culture where the weak are not rejected" (p. 261), where the beauty of each person is discovered, and the poorest people, the handicapped, are placed at the centre of the family to become themselves teachers and community formers. The last two chapters on the need for new structures and how good ideas can become bad institutions offer many valuable insights from experience and sociology. A book warmly recommended as spiritual reading and as study manual.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Correspondence

Praying the Psalms

Dear Editor,

I would like to reply briefly to Fr Subhash Anand's letter (VIDYAJYOTI, February 1984) about my article on the Psalms (November 1983). The letter makes it clear that the writer is "uncomfortable" not only with the Psalms but also with the rest of the Old Testament.

Among the problems mentioned is the "tribal semitic culture" which conditions the Psalms. The fact is that Mary, Jesus, all the apostles and all the authors of the Christian Bible except Luke were born into this culture, and were products of this culture. They did not, and could not, repudiate their own culture. Can we accept them without accepting their culture ? At the same time we need to remember that the purpose of our scriptures is not to recommend semitic culture to us, but something quite different — which ought to be clear at least to a theologian.

Apparently it is the God of the Psalms (and of the OT) who is referred to as "a vindictive tribal god". Are we returning to the Marcionite view that the God of the OT is different from the God of the NT ? Do we accept the fundamental presupposition of the Christian Bible that all the books in it have been gifted to the Christian community through the Holy Spirit, and that they are to be interpreted through faith in Jesus Christ (cf. 2 Tim 3, 15) ?

S thinks of the disciples of Jesus as sharing "the theological vision" of the psalmists (and of the OT) already during the public ministry of Jesus. According to Luke, Jesus could say to two representatives of these disciples; "O foolish men and slow to believe. . ." Luke speaks of the *risen* Lord opening the minds of all the disciples including the apostles to understand the scriptures.

The letter speaks of the "cultic understanding of the liturgy" in the Psalms. Please see how severely the cultic understanding of the liturgy is criticised in Ps 50 (49) Surely other Psalms do not contradict this Ps.

I don't see the application of the "safe norm" mentioned in the last paragraph of the letter: *in dubiis libertas.* In the Christian view the permanent value of the Psalms, which are the quintessence of the Hebrew scriptures, is not something doubtful. Christ freed us not from the yoke of the Psalms or of the OT but from the aberrant Jewish Pharisaic rabbinic interpretations of their scriptures

The letter speaks of priests, religious and seminarians finding it hard to pray the Psalms. Who are guiding them, and what guidance do they receive ? Re-evaluation of the place of the Psalms in Christian prayer must be based on the Christian consensus about what the Psalms are. My article deals with this consensus.

Vidyajyoti,
Delhi 100054

C. M. CHERIAN, S.J.

Book Reviews

Commentary on Matthew

The Gospel according to St Matthew. By Leopold SABOURIN, S J Vol I *Bombay St Paul Publications* 1982 Pp 451, Rs 45

This first volume contains the general introduction and the commentary to 1,1-7,27 The General Introduction (pp 19-173) goes through the usual introductory questions Regarding the origins of our first Gospel (ch 1), the author sees Mt as an enriched and a notably enlarged edition of a primitive Aramaic gospel preserving its substantial structure, reorganizing the order of the discourses, and attempting to align the narrative sections with the discourses Mt depends also on Mk and Q Following Plummer, Sabourin dates Mt from a little after 70, but before 75 The apostle Matthew is recognized to be the author of the primitive Aramaic Gospel but not of our Greek Mt In ch 2 the main literary characteristics of Mt are mentioned Jewish Christian traits, contents of the sayings of Jesus which differ in Mt and Lk, doublets, but especially the fulfilment quotations As plan of the Gospel (ch 3) which would fully account for its contents, Sabourin proposes a threefold divison I the double prologue, or the person of Jesus as Son of David and Son of God (1,1-4,16), 2. the Mission of Jesus, I the Kingdom proclaimed and manifested (4,17-16,20), 3 the Mission of Jesus, II the Messianic crisis (16,21-28, 20). The whole Gospel is divided into 13 subsections. Some key themes are exposed (ch 4), more particularly the Kingdom of Heaven (ch 5, pp 83-108) discipleship (ch 6) and Mt's Christology (ch 7, pp 125-156) Christ, Son of David, Son of Man, Servant, teacher, healer, shepherd, the Majestic Christ, no Wisdom Christology is found in Mt The Synoptic Question (ch 8) is discussed at some length (pp 157-173), the chapter concludes proposing a new hypothesis by Ph. Rolland (unpublished so far)

The commentary proper gives for each section a short introduction, the text (RSV), and the interpretation, rather in detail (275 pp for 7 chapters), discussing various interpretations There are three excursuses 1 Mt 1-2 and literary Forms, 2 John the Baptist. the testimony of Flavius Josephus, John, Elijah and the Eschatological Prophet, John and the Messiah, John and Qumran. 3 Matthew/Jesus and the Law, mainly in connection with Mt 5,17-20

In his Foreword the author says that "in substance this study on the first gospel grew out of the author's lectures at the Pontifical Biblical Institute in Rome" (p 11) A mere glance at the book, the Table of Contents, the abundant footnotes and bibliographical references might have suggested some such probability The author wishes to make the work useful to non-specialists, and therefore, he has "avoided, as much as possible, technical language and discussions that do not illuminate the text" (p 11) The book thus is meant to be a work of vulgarization From previous publications all know how the author excells in analysing or surveying present day positions in one or other field of exegesis The book is a mine of information, its strength lies in the staggering amount of scholarly opinions collected and briefly exposed. As such the work will render service especially to students for an orientation to the appropriate literature, particularly as we may expect that the second volume will have good indexes. One wonders, however, whether the work really remains at the level of vulgarization Too often technical terms do occur without any explanation: the bibliographical notes refer to publications to which the general reader has hardly any access, and to studies published in languages with which readers at large cannot be expected to be familiar Frequently Greek texts from OT and NT (sometimes more than one line) are quoted without any translation It seems to me that the book would gain by a simpler approach, without losing of its informative character

The encyclopedic character of the work has its drawback, viz., the author

tends to be too self-effacing behind the assembled opinions. His own exegesis is on the whole prudent, avoiding extreme positions. Yet some interpretations astonish; v g., on p. 203 we read. "Mt will also express his belief in the divinity of the Child by the mention of the *proskynesis* of the Magi (2.11, cf 14:33)." Why should the word not have the same meaning in the case of the Canaanite woman (15,25), or the mother of John and James (20,20), or the servant in the parable (18,26) ? Commenting on the 6th Beatitude, 'the pure in heart will see God', the author explains. "Thus the 6th Beatitude is one of the rare biblical *loci* in which eternal bliss is described in terms of the beatific vision" (p. 350) !

Few typographical errors have escaped the attention of the proof-readers, but the book deserved better paper and better inking.

J. VOLCKAERT, S J

Studies in John

Studies in the Gospel of John. By Matthew VELLANICKAL, *Bangalore. Asian Trading Corporation*, 1982 Pp 224 Rs 20

This book contains twelve studies on John's Gospel Some of the studies are thematic and span large sections of the Gospel: Jesus of the Fourth Gospel, the Spirit, discipleship, sharing in the communion of life of God and the Mother of Jesus Others are more detailed exegetical studies of particular sections of the Gospel.

The method used by the author is basically the historical critical method whose goal is to uncover the author meaning of the text, though clearly in his study of the Bread of life Catholic Eucharistic tradition has coloured his exegesis The author also depends upon a literary analysis of the structure of the text. At times this helps to highlight the meaning and is a valuable tool, yet at times the analysis seems to force the text into a sought literary structure

Anyone acquainted with the work of Brown, Schnackenburg, Mollat and de la Potterie will note how deeply the author is part of and indebted to these authors. In a number of places almost word for word use of other authors has not been acknowledged.

We can be grateful that the author has gathered together in one volume this series of articles he had published in various periodicals over the years and made available his insights and a wealth of Johannine study at a reasonable price

PATRICK M MEAGHER, S J

Good News and Christian Life

Good News of God. By E M. SIDEBOTTOM *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1982 Pp viii-136 £ 5.95

The title of the book is significant. "the gospel is not only good news from God but good news of God, of his nature and character" (p 1) The central theme of the NT is the essential and unequivocal goodness of God, who 'so loved that he gave'. This central emphasis is explicit in the Gospels, James and 1 Jn, in Paul it is rather implicit.

"Name and Kingdom" (ch 1) are two basic notions in the Gospels. Modern Gospel research commonly assumes that eschatology is the centre of the Gospel message Though this notion is important the Gospel should not be represented as a circle of which eschatology is the centre, but rather as an ellipse with two foci, viz., eschatology and the name or character of God, the last being the more important one, prior to and informing the eschatology. Israel's tradition as reflected in the OT seems originally to have considered God to be the origin of both good and evil However, an evolution can be traced so that at the time of the NT the idea prevailed that all evil, physical and moral, has its origin in Satan Jesus' mission precisely was to overthrow the devil In this God's character of unequivocal goodness is manifested, and the endtime has come God's goodness is revealed in the "Works and Signs" (ch 2) which Jesus performed, in them 'the finger of God', God's presence can be seen "God's goodness is the determinative factor, the characteristic of the authentic Jesus tradition and gives it its form" (p 27) "The Goodness of God" (ch. 3) is essential to God, it is God's fatherhood. Yet, certain passages in the Gospels could give the impression that God is not wholly beneficent, that at times he is unwilling to do good, that he is vengeful and implacable, punishing sinners This impression may give rise to "Distortions and Misunderstandings" (ch 4) "Yet, the only univocal, non-metaphorical statement about his (God's) character in the Gospels declares roundly that he is

good to virtuous and wicked alike" (p. 40). We must take into account the parabolic context of these apparent prejudicial passages, we must note also that "the only passages in the Gospels which would impugn the character of God as thorough-going goodness are either suspect on other grounds or turn out on inspection to bear a different aspect" (p 55) However, there still remains a difficulty, viz., "Judgement the Shadow Side" (ch 5) We note that "the distinctive doctrine of God in the Gosels is that he is indiscriminately Good The corresponding doctrine of judgement is that it is not the arbitrary sentence of God but the consequence of human choice It is agreed on all sides that in the Gospels 'men sentence themselves'" (p. 56) Literary analysis of the texts confirms this view, and indicates that the opinion goes back to Christ himself God is not a judge inflicting punishment, he is the Saviour who constantly works to deliver men from evil. It is the total goodness of God which gives the Christian ethos its own style Christian ethics and the goodness of God are intimately connected, hence the importance of the *Imitatio Dei* (ch. 6) which is based on love for our fellow-men; this requires ethical maturity The book concludes with a chapter on "The Character of God", his absolute goodness examined in relation to the contingent world and to evil; God's inscrutability and the modern cynicism about the character of God. We must accept the fact that God is unfathomable, but this truth must not lead to the conclusion that God is not reliable. The whole Christian Tradition argues, from the Gospel-revelation onwards throughout successive centuries, about God's self-imposed limitations and Providence. Evidence is afforded mainly from theologians and mystics. Evil is more than the absence of good; as a matter of fact, evil cannot exist without good, but the converse is not true.

The book is at once a study, a meditation and exhortation. We have here a spiritual theology based on the Gospels, especially John. The perspective is mainly pastoral. The author is well read. The Scripture arguments are based upon exegetical work of which only the conclusions are referred to without entering into detailed exegetical analyses. Throughout the book the development of the argument may appear, perhaps unavoidably, somewhat repetitious; and some solutions to difficulties may appear somewhat laboured. The book requires careful reading but remains well within the reach of the general reader.

J VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Christian Life. New Testament Perspectives By Joseph PATHRAPANKAL CMI. *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications,* 1982. Pp. viii-113. Rs 18.

The book is a collection of nine studies, some of them published previously, which have relevance to the Christian life.

An introductory chapter studies the concept or biblical spirituality, more particularly in its relationship to Christian spirituality which, while having some basic and unchangeable characteristics must be interpreted within the framework of the new world vision that emerges in the course of history Biblical spirituality is seen as the basis for a new spirituality adapted to our times, a spirituality which understands Christinity not so much as a religion but a way of life, after the example of Paul who defended his new life in Christ as the way (Acts 24,14-16). Such spirituality "will enable the Christians of our times and our culture to live their life meaningfully" (p 6).

Two aspects of spirituality are studied in the perspective of the Gospels, viz., "Aspects of Discipleship in the Sermon on the Mount", and "The Cross of Jesus". A much larger part of the book is devoted to Pauline spirituality, of which the following topics are developed: the spirit of sonship in Rom 8; unity in creation and redemption; authority, the New Covenant. Two questions, viz, "Righteousness and Dharma", and "The New Testament Foundation and Meaning of Evangelization" are examined in the perspective of the whole NT.

"The aim of this book is to feed the Christian reader with thoughts and thought-patterns which are basic and fundamental to a spirituality based on the Bible" (p. vi). A prophetic tone runs through the chapters as they analyse the various topics in the light of present-day trends and crises within the Church, searching the NT for a solution to the problems. The exposition is clear, based upon the biblical message. Meaningful sub-titles help to follow the development of the argument. The studies require a careful reading which will be rewarding; the author's hope is that "these pages will invite the readers to a clearer and more authentic vision of Christian life" (p. vi).

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

Christology

Christology in the Making. A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation. By James D. G. DUNN. *London SCM Press* 1980. Pp. xvii-443. £ 10.50.

Two previous books, widely acclaimed, had prepared James Dunn well for the new inquiry into which he launches in the present volume. They were *Jesus and the Spirit* (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1978, pp. 140-141) in which he followed through the Gospel tradition the theme of Jesus' experience of the Spirit of God, and *Unity and Diversity in the New* Testament (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1979, pp. 236-237) where faith in Jesus Christ was shown to be the core element of unity between the diversely organized apostolic Churches With the present volume Dunn turns to Christology proper and its development through the N.T. tradition specifically to "A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation". This, he tells us, is part of a larger inquiry into the origins of Christianity in which he is currently engaged Among reasons for offering distinctly his findings on *Christology in the Making* are the centrality of the subject which deserves separate treatment, and its relevance to the recent Christological discussion, sparked off especially by the *Myth of God Incarnate*

The scope of the inquiry is limited. It does not embrace the whole of N.T. Christology to show its progressive development; it is strictly limited to asking where for the first time and in a way which is exegetically compulsive the concept is found in the N T of a pre-existent divine person become incarnate in Jesus Christ. Dunn rightly insists that in such an inquiry we must guard ourselves against reading into the texts more than was primarily intended, guided as we easily are by perceptions of the mystery of Jesus Christ which only later texts will bring to the fore, for each text the question which critical exegesis must ask is · What precise meaning did the author intend and how would his original readers in their context have understood what he wrote ? At the same time Dunn is aware that some texts are open to a deeper interpretation than *needs* to have been immediately perceived.

The procedure adopted for the inquiry is analytical. It consists in studying through different chapters the N.T. Christological titles which may, or may not, have been used to convey the idea of a personal pre-existence of Jesus Christ. These titles are followed through the various writings of the N. T. in which they occur to verify in each case whether the context of meaning warrants the concept of personal pre-existence. Chapters thus include· The Son of God, The Son of Man, The Last Adam, Spirit or Angel ?· The Wisdom of God, The Word of God. After going through the material in "a series of 'vertical' cross-sections", Dunn summarises his findings on "a series of 'horizontal' sightings" (p 251). What stands out is that there is no pre-Christian antecedent to the doctrine of the incarnation, that, Jesus' sense of intimate divine sonship and eschatological mission notwithstanding, it cannot be shown that he understood himself to be the incarnate Son of God, that the Wisdom Christology of the later Pauline letters offers the most immediate antecedent to the doctrine of the incarnation, that "as the first century of the Christian era drew to a close we find a concept of Christ's real pre-existence beginning to emerge", especially in Hebrews, "but only with the Fourth Gospel can we speak of a full blown conception of Christ's personal pre-existence and a clear doctrine of incarnation" (p. 258).

It is not possible to follow here in detail all the minute analyzes of the texts and context-meanings. Not all exegetes will follow Dunn in holding that the pre-existence implied in the Pauline Wisdom Christology remains 'ideal', to become 'real' only in John where it is welded together with the logos poem and John's own distinctive Christology of the Son of God. All, however, will agree with him that John's Gospel represents a climax where the doctrine of incarnation is clearly formulated for the first time. "In a very real sense all that follows (t)hereafter is a dotting of the 'i's and crossing of the 't's of John's Christology" (p. 258). Dunn also remarks pointedly that it would be inappropriate to label the initial formulations of the doctrine of God incarnate as myth. Neither in Paul nor in John is there recourse to a pre-Christian mythology, what there is is the progressive unfolding of the decisiveness of the Christ-event as God's total self-expression in history

The book is undoubtedly a major contribution to the study of N. T. Christology and to the present Christological debate, which no serious student

in the field can henceforth afford to ignore

J DUPUIS, S J

Christ Proclaimed: Christology as Rethoric By Frans Jozef VAN BEECK, S J New York Ramsey, *Paulist Press*, 1979 Pp xiii-616 £ 8 95

The title of this voluminous work on Christology, by a Dutch theologian teaching in USA, requires some explanation Four convictions, the author tells us, have shaped his approach to Christology first, the widespread yearning for a deep experience of Christian identity second, the recognition that this identity is primarily conveyed in worship and witness third, the need to interpret Christological statements in the light of the intentions, affections and situations of those making and hearing them that is within the "rethoric" of their living speech, fourth, the fact that live Christian worship and witness are prompted by the presence of Christ alive in the Spirit Out of these four convictions, van Beeck builds a christology which purports to be in line with tradition yet wide open, speculative yet based on commitment and in close touch with spirituality, and always centred on the resurrection as its abiding origin

The method is original and personal, but the book makes unusually high demands on the reader And this for more than one reason Not only because of the enormous amount of erudition employed in the discussion of Christological views, both ancient and modern, not only because of the further frequent appeal to philosophical theories, but even more because of the intricate analyzes of modern theories of linguistic analysis which the non-initiated reader will find difficult to follow Perhaps much the same could have been written much more simply This seems to be true where van Beeck's view of the theory-praxis relationship, essential to his method, is concerned. The originating, non-cognitive element in Christological language is to be found, he alleges, in adoring surrender to the personal mystery of Jesus It is from this act of commitment that Christological speech will flow in worship and witness. The cognitive elements in the rethoric, while vitally important, must be located within this act if they are to yield their full meaning. The task of Christology is to articulate the nature and implications of this rethoric This is true, but it amounts, as pointed out by one reviewer, to "an extremely sophisticated defence of a brief and familiar maxim *lex orandi est lex credendi*".

In his own terminology and with his own premises van Beeck embarks on the one hand on the new quest for the historical Jesus and on the other on a theological elaboration of Jesus' identity The personal identity of Jesus he finds essentially in his total receptivity to the Father and utter self-giving to mankind "What the tradition refers to as 'enhypostatic human nature' we call 'the human person of Jesus Christ in its concrete individual nature', what the tradition refers to as 'the *hypostasis* (or person) of the *logos*' we call 'Jesus' absolute irreducibility to his concrete individual nature in virtue of his total surrender to the Father'. This surrender-in-relationship denotes the inner quality of what the tradition has termed Christ's consubstantiality with the Father" (pp 422-423) Van Beeck hopes thus to do justice to the Christological councils, though whether he does must remain open to question His final plea is for patience towards all Christologies which search in Jesus for ultimate meaning, even if their measuring up with traditional formulations may be hard to establish.

J. DUPUIS, S J

Jésus-Christ dans la Tradition de l'Eglise. By Bernard Sesboüé, S J *Paris, Desclée*, 1982 Pp 320 FF 125.

Christological studies are marked today by a massive return to scripture. Long past is the time when the study of Christology was primarily based on the early councils the dogmatic affirmations of which were verified in stray biblical quotations through the proof-text method. The methodology has been reversed, and the gain is certain The new quest for the historical Jesus has borne fruit, and it has once more become possible to show how the Christology of the New Testament is rooted in Jesus' own self-understanding, even while the apostolic faith-interpretation has itself undergone considerable development. Studies in N. T. Christology often end with a brief statement — against the myth of hellenization — that biblical faith in Jesus the Christ validates the Christological developments of post-biblical tradition. These were, in their own context, legitimate elaborations of the mystery of Christ's person. The continuity thus acknowledged by many

Continued on p 150. *See also pp.* 156, 158

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII APRIL 1984 No. 4

Editorial

It is a strange anomaly that the mystery of the Trinity which is at the core of the Christian message seems to exercise so little influence on the life of many Christians. That God is three persons rather than one would appear to make little difference to them; they are, as Karl Rahner puts it, "practical 'monotheists' in their spiritual life". The reason, no doubt, is to be sought in the fact that traditionally the theology of the Trinity has been predominantly centred on the inner life of the Godhead, thereby doing less than justice to God's real involvement in human history. Recent theology, however, has re-established the balance and brought to the fore the correspondence between God's manifestation in history and the inter-personal communion of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Fr Subhash ANAND goes beyond affirming this continuity, stressed by modern theologians. He suggests that the communion of three persons arises in God himself from his involvement in history: "The salvation of man is the *raison d'etre* of the Trinity. Seen in this way, it is more thoroughly a mystery of salvation."

A Consultation on Christian Presence among Muslims in Asia, organized by the FABC Offices of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and of Mission, was held at Varanasi at the end of last year. In a paper entitled "Christianity and Islam" which he presented at the Conference. Fr Thomas MICHEL, a member of the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christians, reflects on post-conciliar papal pronouncements on relations with Muslims. He observes in the declarations of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II a progressive broadening up of theological perspective and a widening scope for dialogue. Fr Christian TROLL reports on the Consultation and its conclusions. He also surveys some recent literature pertaining to Christian-Muslim relations.

1983 marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the monastic community of Kurisumala, founded by Fr Francis Mahieu, a Cistercian from the West. On the Silver Jubilee the founder, who long ago has taken the name of Francis ACHARYA, tells the story of the origins, the growth and expansion of a foundation where the Oriental monastic tradition of Christianity has successfully blended with Indian monasticism and the contemplative tradition of the country.

The Trinity as God in History

Subhash ANAND

FROM the Council of Trent till recent times "the 4th-century dogmatic formulation 'one God in three persons' stood forth as the central datum of Christian revelation and the point of departure for the exposition of Christian doctrine."[1] Hence the would-be-theologian has necessarily to reflect afresh on this, not merely because God, being a mystery, always transcends human comprehension but also because man's understanding of God is very much related to his understanding of himself; and also because it is the task of theology to show the significance of the datum of faith for man, for man who is essentially in history. Being in history means that not only man's problems and needs, but also his self-understanding — to some extent at least change Hence yesterday's answers and solutions may not be quite meaningful and helpful today. Nay, in some cases they may even prove detrimental to the mission of the Church.[2] Hence the need of a fresh reflection.

This article is offered as one attempt to seek afresh the meaning of the Holy Trinity for man today. It is written in a spirit of inquiry. Therefore I will be grateful to receive comments not only from professional theologians, but also from pastors and missionaries, because these are the people who have to explain more directly to the faithful this mystery of our faith.[3] After having presented some problems I and, I presume, others face, I shall offer an explanation of the Holy Trinity which, it seems to me, provides a more satisfactory answer to these problems. Then I shall show that the proposed explanation is well within the limits of orthodoxy. Lastly I will try to bring out its theological suitability by explaining how the solution proposed earlier fits in better with the other aspects of our Christian faith.

1. R. L. RICHARD, "Holy Trinity", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, XIV, p. 295.
2. E.g., Karl RAHNER shows how our defective understanding of the Trinity can put off the Muslims. Cf. his article, "God's Oneness and Trinity", *Vidyajyoti* 1982, Septemeber, pp. 366-379
3. My present address: St Joseph's Seminary, 4 Tashkent Road, Allahabad, 211001.

Does God Really Care ?

St John tells us that God, who is love (1 Jn 4: 8, 16), so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son (Jn 3: 16). St Matthew tells us that the first and great commandment is that we love God with our whole being (Mt 22: 37). If God were not to love me — his love being totally gratuitous — would he be different ? If the love he has for me does not make him different, then can we still say that his love is real, and not just an illusion ? Am I really seeing a snake and not just a piece of rope ? Some silver and not a sea-shell ? Similarly, if the love I have for God does not make him different, then does my love have any meaning ? If my love does not have any meaning for him, who is my ultimate goal, does my existence have any meaning ? This question is very legitimate because "what happens *really* matters only if it matters everlastingly. What happens can matter everlastingly only if it matters to him who is everlasting."[4] If my love leaves God unaffected, then can we still think of him as our *Abba* ? Is he not, rather, like the sun that continues to shine lifelessly whether we open our windows or not ?

Closely associated with the idea of love is that of freedom. Contemporary man is deeply conscious of his freedom and its significance for him. It is by his free choice that he enters into communication with others and thereby become more aware of himself. It is by his freedom that he makes himself. It is by exercising his freedom that man enters history — another major idea of our times. It is not man's metaphysical essence but the existential exercise of freedom that determines man's future. What is important is not merely that man is a rational animal, but that he actually loves, and this involves freedom. Thus freedom is seen as the most precious attribute of man and he is prepared to die rather than surrender his freedom. Freedom is the capacity to determine oneself. If God is free, does not his exercise of freedom mean a definite self-determination ? Can the concepts of *actio ad extra* or *actio totaliter transiens* adequately safeguard the meaning of freedom ? If freedom and its exercise result in a change totally outside the agent, is it still a value ? God is free to choose any particular type of creation. He has chosen the creation we actually have. If his decision makes no difference within him, he would be the same were he to choose another creation. Thus the difference would be explained completely from outside !

When the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, he taught them not the art of pure contemplation, as some Upanishadic sage

4. J. B. COBB, "The World and God", in E. H. COUSINS (ed.), *Process Theology* New York, Newman Press, (1971), p. 168.

would do, but the simple Our Father, primarily a prayer of petition. To explain the dynamics of this prayer Jesus tells them the parable of the man in need going to his friend, a friend who eventually hears the plea of the man knocking at the door. Jesus concludes his instruction with a rethorical question: "How much more will the heavenly Father give...!" (Lk 11: 13, RSV). Here again the same question will arise: Will not our heavenly Father be worse than that friend in the parable if he were to be unaffected by our prayer ? It is true that Christian prayer is essentially a longing for God's kingdom. But even in this case, "prayer has no sense, unless God himself is genuinely affected by all that we say and do. The minimal condition of our praying, as of our life generally, is that it have an ultimate significance, that it be heard by God."[5] If God is not changed by our prayer, then how does he hear it ? If he remains the same then my prayer is heard even before I make it, or even if I do not make it !

The Holy Trinity is not a mystery of a God who is aloof from his people. The history of salvation is the history of the revelation of this mystery: the triune God involved in the salvation of man. This is sometimes expressed by a terse formula that the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity, and vice versa. This formula "seems to become generally accepted in contemporary theology and is certainly not a theological proposition which can be simply rejected as heterodox"[6] Can one enter the history of another without at the same time oneself participating in that history ? Can the immanent Trinity be the economic Trinity, and vice versa, if the history of salvation does not presuppose some change within God ? This question arises also within the context of the Incarnation of the Son of God.

The Christian tradition has consistently maintained that Jesus IS God. God does not merely reveal himself to us in Jesus. Jesus is not only the medium of God's self-revelation. He is God in our midst: Emmanuel. The Incarnation has been seen as a supreme act of compassion: because God loves man, he participates in their tragic history. He goes to Egypt (Mt 2: 14). He is there where his people are slaves, victims of brutal exploitation. Once again the same question: Did God really enter history ? Is the classical doctrine of *communicatio idiomatum* a satisfactory answer ? Is it really different from Docetism ? If we say that God suffered merely by virtue of *communicatio idiomatum*, do we not rob the Cross of its specific meaning as the supreme symbol of a loving God ?

---

5. S. M. OGDEN, "The Reality of God", in COUSINS, Op. cit., p. 131, footnote 12.
6. K. RAHNER, Art. cit., p. 373.

Writing in 1965, Yves Congar stated that the "meaning of eschatology is one of the greatest re-discoveries of contemporary Catholic Theology. Gone are the days when theologians spoke of the "Last Things".[7] We now look forward to the parousia of the Lord, the final event of salvation history, when God will be all in all (1 Cor 15: 28). In what sense is the parousia the return of the Lord ? Why is it so important to salvation history ?

Historical Becoming within God

According to the Upanishadic tradition, God is *sat-cit-ānanda*: Being, Consciousness, and Bliss. He is *Sat* because he is and his existence is uncaused, without beginning and without end. He is *Cit* because he is not just there, like a piece of wood; he is present to himself. He is *Ānanda* because he totally accepts himself, perfectly loves himself because he is what he is. Thus we may better translate *sat-cit-ānanda* as Being, Consciousness and Love. Love, from which bliss flows, presupposes freedom. God is totally free. This freedom is another way of saying that God is totally independent. Madhva will say that God alone is self-dependent (*sva-tantra*), and that is the ground of his total freedom (*sva-tantra*). Since God alone is exclusively self-dependent, he alone can perfectly love himself for his own sake. Thus he is perfect joy. Only in a dependent being does love imply another person. Hence a dependent being cannot be fully blissful all by itself. According to the Advaitic tradition, God does not have consciousness and bliss. He IS consciousness and bliss. Thus there is no real distinction or differentiation within God. God is *nir-guṇa*.

The Christian tradition, on the other hand, affirms that within the Godhead there are three persons who are really distinct from each other. The Christian tradition presents God primarily as love. It is this that should help us to understand the mystery of the Blessed Trinity. God freely decides to make man and to call him to intimacy with himself. This decision implies a definite plan and the totally gratuitous gift of love. "Before" the decision to create and save man, God was *sat-cit-ānanda* in an undifferentiated way. Now he is *sat-cit-ānanda* with real internal distinctions. He is no longer the original *Sat*, no longer merely his own existence. He has, in the mystry of his absolute freedom, turned himself towards a definite other. He has freely accepted to be the ground of existence of creation, according to a plan which is fully his own conception, his idea, his word. God

7. "The Church: The People of God", *Concilium* 1965, January, p. 10.

is now the Father, the fountain and the unoriginated origin of all else, both within and without the Godhead. Similarly, the divine consciousness now has a new content: God's plan to create and call mankind unto himself, in and through Jesus. God is no longer the original *Cit*, mere self-consciousness. The divine consciousness has turned itself towards a definite other. There is now a very definite new datum rooted in the gratuitous free decision of the Father. The divine consciousness has now become the Word of the Father, the mystery of his will (Eph 1 . 9), the mystery hidden for ages (Col 1: 26). Lastly, God finds joy in this Word, in his plan, his idea. It is the fruit of his love. He has graciously accepted to love someone other than himself. He has turned himself towards another in love and joy. God is no longer the original *Ānanda*, the love and consequent joy that is essential to the divine nature. There is now the love the Father has for his Son and for the creation to come. There is also the joy the Father has in being loved by his Son, and through him by all his adopted children. This divine joy is the Holy Spirit, God's love poured into our hearts, the gift of a Father's love (Rom 5: 5).

Thus we see that, according to the explanation proposed above, there is a becoming within the Godhead, and this becoming is due to a free decision. There is a "historical process" within God. There is history within God. But this history within God is directed to the history outside God, a history that will unfold itself in time. I also suggest that this history of man affects the history of God. When God decided to create and call man to himself, he planned to do so in and through Jesus. In Jesus God not only achieves his best creation, the best expression of his will, but also reveals his plan to man. Through Jesus man comes to the Father. By accepting Jesus man accepts his Father. Thus Jesus is an integral part of God's plan, and therefore of his Word. In the incarnation the birth of the Son reachss its fulness, the resurrection being the final point. So too the procession of the Holy Spirit reaches its completion through the history of salvation. The Holy Spirit is the love and the consequent joy the Father has for his Word and for his creation. This joy of God is completed, as I have already stated earlier, by the love man freely gives to God.

Safeguarding Orthodoxy

In the explanation proposed above, the Blessed Trinity is seen as the result of a gratuitous self-disposing by God. God freely decides to be triune. God is factually, but not essentially, triune. He happens to be triune, but he need not have been. As far as my knowledge goes, no document of the Magisterium declares that God is triune

by his very nature or that he is necessarily so. What is commonly taught is that from all eternity God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That something is from all eternity does not necessarily mean that it is so by its very nature. Thomas Aquinas accepts the idea of *creatio ab aeterno*. Even in the case of creation in time, traditional Scholastic philosophers will maintain that the divine decision to create the world, even though totally gratuitous, is *ab aeterno*, and identical with the divine being. Otherwise there would be within the Godhead both, time and the composition of substance and accidents !

The explanation given above is not the same as Modalism which teaches that "the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are modes, aspects, or energies of one and the same divine person, who is given different names according as he exercises different functions *ad extra* or outside the Trinity: creation (Father), redemption (Son), sanctification (Holy Spirit). God, one from eternity, became three in time."[8] I maintain that God is triune from eternity, that there is a real distinction between the Father and the Son, between the Father and the Spirit, and between the Son and the Spirit, that these distinctions are within the Godhead. The real distinction does not mean tri-theism, because the one God who is necessarily *sat-cirt-ānanda* so turns himself towards the other that there are three real relations: the relation in the order of being (Father), the relation in the order of consciousness (Son), the relation in the order of love (Holy Spirit). May be, I could explain this trinity-unity idea by an example: I know Mary, I love Mary, I decide to marry Mary. My knowing Mary does not necessarily imply that I love her, for there are many women, pretty and not so pretty, whom I know, but whom I do not love. So too, my loving her is not identical with my deciding to marry her, because there are other women whom I love but do not intend to marry.... Thus by knowledge, love, and decision I dispose myself towards the other in three distinct ways. There are three real relations. The fact of distinction does not necessarily imply separability.

If I have understood Karl Rahner right — and that is not always easy — the Son and the Holy Spirit are "two modes of God's subsistence in the world". Let me quote:

> The unoriginate God (called Father) possesses from eternity the possibility of communicating himself in history, and also, in the same way, the possibility to implant himself into the innermost centre of the spiritual creature as its dynamism and destination. These two eternal possibilities are pure actuality and as such, *eo ipso*, distinct from the unoriginate God. In so far as they belong to God as such — for otherwise they cannot be God himself — they

8. P. J. HAMELL, "Modalism", in *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, IX, p. 988.

> can be called modes of subsistence. Thus it becomes clear that the two modes of God's subsistence in the world truly belong to God himself and that they do not merely refer to modalities constituted by a free divine decision, and therefore inevitably belonging to the finite realm of the creaturely, not to that of God himself.

Here the following comments are in place. First, Rahner leaves us in the dark as to how the two possibilities are pure actuality. Second, if the Son and the Holy Spirit are seen as modes of God's subsistence in the world, then how can he on the one hand maintain that these modes are not the result of a free decision, and on the other say that the world is freely created by God ? Third, if the Son and the Holy Spirit are seen as modes of subsistence within the Godhead, but not necessarily in the world, then even if the immanent Trinity is the economic Trinity would the reverse be true ? Would it still be true to say that the economic Trinity is also the immanent Trinity ? Last, we have already indicated that, according to the traditional Scholastic philosophy, the divine decision to create the world, though gratuitous, is eternal and identical with the divine being.

Divine transcendence seems to be threatened by the explanation given in the previous section. How can there be a becoming in God ? How can God be completed by his own creation ? Let me state apologetically that no theological system is completely free from inconsistencies Classical natural theology safeguards divine transcendence by saying that God is the unmoved mover, *motor immobilis, nir-vikāra brahman*. No philosophical system was so concerned with safeguarding divine transcendence as the Advaitic tradition. But to save God it killed man ! Only Brahman is real. All else, including Iśvara, the creator-god, is a big illusion. Scholasticism tried to save the reality of creation by postulating a real, divine but gratuitous decision, a decision which results in an act that is totally transient, leaving the Creator untouched. The decision itself, as we have already stated, is eternal and identical with the divine being. When we are faced with two different approaches to the divine, both of which are not free from inconsistencies, it seems to me that we should choose not that which appears to be more logical and philosophically neat, but that which appears to be in greater harmony with man's religious aspiration and experience. The Christian tradition has held that to save man God died on the Cross. Hence any attempt to safeguard divine transcendence implying a denial of the ultimate significance of the human person is not only wrong, but is a radical denial of Christianity itself.

---

9. K. RAHNER, Art. cit., p. 377.

If the Word, already in his origin, contains the Incarnation, then is Jesus Christ really the totally new event, the completely free gift of a loving God ? I think this question is similar to that hotly discussed some time ago: If man, by his very nature, longs for the beatific vision, then can we still say that the beatific vision is totally a gift of God ? We forget that God gratuitously made man what he is, and that this desire for the beatific vision is itself the gift of God. God makes us desire what he wishes to give us. So too, when we say that the incarnation of the Son is already contained in the divine utterance of the Word, we by no means intend to deny the gratuitous character of the Incarnation. It is seen as part and completion of the more basic gift: God's totally free decision to save man.

If we accept the Trinity as the gratuitous self-disposing of God, then can not God once again return to his pre-trinitarian state ? Need the Trinity be for ever ? The history of salvation is not a play, a *līlā*, a drama. On the stage I can pretend to love a person and allow him to love me and to affect my life. But once the drama is over, I forget him and live my life as if nothing had ever happened. The drama of salvation is much more serious than that. It is more like a very happy couple freely adopting an orphaned child. They know that they have adopted not a doll, but a human person who not only is loved by them, but also loves them in return. Because they are deeply loving, the foster parents greatly cherish the love they receive from their adopted child and this does deepen their joy. At times the child can hurt them. Of course, the parents, if they so wish, can later on cast away the child. If, however, they were to do this, they would be untrue to themselves. In the Old Testament, faithful love is one of the most emphasized characteristics of God. The Trinity, as I explained, is the unfolding of this faithful love God has for us, and his love is for ever. When we tell a person, "I love you", what we are actually saying — if we are sincere — is "I love you forever".

Does the Trinity still remain a mystery ? "Mystery" can be understood in at least three different ways. On the popular level, it means something for which we do not have an adequate explanation. The Blessed Trinity is a mystery in this sense, because whatever we say by way of explanation is subsequent to the Biblical revelation. Moreover, this explanation does not tell us why there should be three persons in the Godhead, not more nor less. Some modern thinkers will make a distinction between a mystery and a problem. The latter can be probed into. It is treated as an object. A mystery implies a personal element before which the other has to stand in reverence. One cannot approach a mystery without oneself being in some way

involved in it. Before a mystery one cannot be neutral. Whatever understanding we have of that mystery presupposes some self-disclosure. In this sense too the Blessed Trinity is a mystery, not merely because it is what God is saying about himself, but also because, since it is the unfolding of his love, we cannot be neutral in the presence of this mystery. In the New Testament "mystery" means God's plan of salvation hidden for ages, but now revealed in Jesus (Rom 16: 25; Col 1: 26). If we take the Trinity as of the very nature of God, as Rahner does, then the connection with the salvation of man is contingent. In our explanation, according to which the Trinity is the becoming within God due to his totally gratuitous decision to save man, the Blessed Trinity is not meaningful except in relation to man's salvation. To put it differently, the salvation of man is the *raison d'etre* of the Trinity. Seen in this way, it is more thoroughly a mystery of salvation. Why does God save man ? To this we can answer only by identifying ourselves with the Tamil mystic who said to Shiva: "You are mad, O Shiva, and you make me also mad ! Yes, you are mad, because you have the most beautiful Parvati as your wife, and you still want me. Surely you are mad." The Blessed Trinity, the mystery of our salvation, is the mystery of the unfathomable and unconditional love of our God. This is the most profound reason why it is a mystery.

The Theological Propriety of the Proposed Explanation

When a theological explanation is attempted, one has not only to safeguard orthodoxy, but also show how the proposed explanation fits in (better) with the other aspects of our faith. I shall now try to do this to some extent. The Christian believes that God reveals himself in history. As different from the revelation given to an individual through a mystical experience, the Biblical revelation takes place through historical events. This means that historical events are not just the medium but also the content of divine revelation. Jesus is not simply the messenger of God; he is also the message of God. As the good old adage goes: *Agere sequitur esse*, or *Qualis actio talis agens*; we now see why God chose history as the medium and content of his revelation. God himself has a history, and this history of God is intimately linked with the history of man. Hence it is "natural" that the history of God be revealed through the history of man. It is not without significance that *Advaita*, which tends to minimize if not completely nullify human history, is based largely on the Upanishads which emphasize the mystic experience. This may also explain why *Prakrti* (the material cause of the universe) and the *jivas* (the individual

souls) are considered eternal. A creative beginning presupposes a totally gratuitous act.

Today thinkers emphasize history as the most specifically human mode of existence. If, according to our explanation, creation and the salvation of man presuppose history within God, and if God made man in his image and likeness, then history as the most specifically human way of being is not merely a philosophical insight into the nature of man, a nature that unfolds itself in space and time. It is also of great theological significance, being part of the divine image in man. Further, since the history of God is in view of the history of man, man's history receives an ultimate significance by becoming part of the divine history. Man's history is sacred. It is the history of salvation. For man time is never merely *chronos*, but always *kairos*, a sacred moment of salvation, a sacrament of eternity. By affirming the sacredness of human history we also affirm the sacredness of the secular, because man's history cannot be thought of except in reference to the secular. But because human history is the expression of the history within God, a secularized secular is suicidal — and that is what we see happening today.

According to the traditional understanding, the Word could very well be without the incarnation. On the other hand, explaining the Word as God's gratuitous plan for man, I said that there is an essential unity between the eternal Son and the historical Jesus. To put it differently, the Word in his very generation contains his historical Incarnation in Jesus. Therefore the life of Jesus on earth is a revelation of the life of the Word in the bosom of the Father. St Paul sums up the life of Jesus in a single sentence: He emptied himself (Phil 2: 7). Today we are rediscovering the *kenōsis* of God. When God decides to create and save man, that is an initial *kenōsis* in as much as he allows himself — if I may put it that way — to be distracted. Though he is perfect Being, Consciousness and Bliss, he turns to "what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not" (1 Cor 1: 28, RSV). But there is a still more profound aspect of the divine *kenōsis*. In freely deciding to create and save men, God wills to create and save not dolls but free human beings. No tradition has affirmed the reality of human freedom so emphatically as the Christian tradition has done. Man can say 'No' to God and stick to it — that is what hell is. Today some Christian theologians feel uncomfortable about the Christian belief in the eternity of hell. But to me the acceptance of hell is the acceptance of the radical sacredness of the freedom of man. Hence the acceptance of another person implies the acceptance of his freedom. History is possible only within a dialectic of freedom:

my freedom and the freedom of others with whom I am involved. God freely involves himself in our lives. This means that in principle he is prepared to face our refusal. His plan, his Word, then, is, to a certain extent at least, conditioned by man's response. This means that there has to be passivity in God. It is this divine passivity that is revealed in the passion and death of Jesus on the Cross. Man can say no to God Man can nail him to the Cross. Is not this way of talking a denial of divine transcendence? The Christian tradition has defined God as love. Only love is absolute, and nothing that man may do can minimize God's love for him. Also this passivity is not imposed upon God from outside. It is the consequence of his love. In the past, I am afraid, we have approached God too philosophically Now we need to take the Bible much more seriously. I do not mean to say that philosophy is not needed. The question is: which philosophy A philosophy that defines God as *motor immobilis* or as *nir-vikāra brahman* cannot do justice to the mystery of love. If God is a mystery, if the Blessed Trinity is a mystery, then it is primarily so because God is love. Love always implies passivity. Love not only gives but also receives, because it is only when the other can also give that he feels his worth I would reject the love of a person who only wants to give and is not prepared to receive from me.

The Holy Spirit is not merely the love and consequent bliss within God, but he is also the love God has for his Word and for his creation. He is also the joy God feels in his Son and in his creation. Here again, the history within God is "completed" by the history without. The Holy Spirit is also the joy the Father has when he receives the love not only of his eternal Son, but also of his adopted sons. In this way the Holy Spirit is specially associated with the Parousia of the Lord, for then the history of salvation will come to its completion. Then God will be all in all (1 Cor 15: 28) No wonder the Spirit and the Bride cry "Come" (Rev 22: 17). The eschatological longing of the Church is also the eschatological longing of the Spirit. This is so because the eschatology of man is also the eschatology of God, just as the history of God is the history of man's salvation. Eschatology is the consummation of history, the final event of God's saving plan for man.

Conclusion: A Christian God

I cannot overcome the temptation of concluding this article by narrating a charming story I heard from a friend of mine. One day Mary and her brother John were walking home after their catechism class. "Mary, what did your teacher say today?", asked John. "She told us", replied Mary, "that God is a very loving and forgiving Father."

"But", said John, "did he not get angry with the people of Sodom and destroy them completely ?" "Yes", answered Mary, "that was before God became a Christian !" May be, we never thought of God as non-Christian. But we have taken him to be the Aristotelian unmoved mover, or the Advaitic changeless Brahman. But in a deep sense God did become a Christian, because he chose love as the sign of his presence in our lives. It is this love that is the ultimate explanation — if I may speak that way — of the mystery of the Blessed Trinity.

Continued from p. 216

cultures and the religious traditions of the world.

The work is divided into two main sections, one summing up T's vision, the other made up of various essays in which T's thought is compared to that of other eminent thinkers, Western and Indian. Under the first heading are exposed: T's *Weltanschauung*, his Christology, his concept of the Eucharist, his spirituality. The comparative essays cover some well-known parallels, but also others less explored so far or hitherto unexplored. The points of comparison can only be listed here. They include: the Indian view of evolution, Karmayoga, Aurobindo, Tagore, Darwin, Bergson, Blondel, Whitehead, Marxism, Marcuse, St Paul, Ireneus, Ignatius Loyola.

The list of topics is sufficient indication of the rich fare which is offered in the book. The two "faiths" of Teilhard, his faith in the evolutionary process of the world and his Christian faith in Christ Omega, stand out clearly, as does also their mutual convergence. In the Indian context, however, an explicit treatment of T's approach to the religious traditions which he met in Asia would have been a welcome addition to the book's first section. It would have shown that the "inclusive Christocentrism" which became after him the mainstream of the Christian theology of world religions was already for T. himself an essential part of his overall vision. T's enduring relevance to the Indian context would thereby have been further enhanced. The book must be welcomed as a worthwhile addition to Teilhardian studies. J. DUPUIS, S.J.

Prophet of Inculturation

Der grosse heroische Asket: Josef Constantius Beschi. By V. M. GNANAPRAGASAM. *Mödling-Wien, Verlag St Gabriel*, 1983. Pp. 117. (No price given.)

This beautifully produced paperback volume, which contains 10 photographic plates and a map indicating the places in South India where Beschi worked, is part of the by now well-established series (about 20 monographs have been published in it so far) entitled 'Missionaries who Shaped History'. An earlier volume had presented Roberto de Nobili's biography. The present work, ably introduced and revised by Martin Kampchen of Shantiniketan, introduces J. C. Beschi — for the first time, I guess, in book form — to a wider German readership. Beschi is protrayed as a congenial successor of de Nobili, making a creative and lasting contribution to 'an Indianization of Indian Christianity'. The Italian Beschi's linguistic and literary genius, his astounding feat of creating enduring literary masterpieces in Tamul, a language he learned only at a mature age, finds adequate expression in this volume. In an age of transition from a largely monolithic Church to truly indigenous Churches, throughout the world, one would like to see this and other volumes of the series made available to readers of English, in and outside India.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Christianity and Island

Reflections on Recent Teachings of the Church

Thomas MICHEL, S.J.*

A YOUNG Muslim couple in Jakarta have for fifteen years been serving the poorest beggars of the city. They have moved to the edge of the garbage dumps to be near those they serve, and have established literacy programs, teach crafts and sewing, conduct Qur'an classes, and find jobs, they support their efforts with a ten-percent tithe from the husband's income. The Algerian shaykh of the Sufi Alawiyya Order wants to meet Mother Teresa because "she is a woman of God and therefore they have much in common". Muslim worshippers in mosques from Mindanao to Morocco pray daily to God with a regularity and sincere devotion that Christians might well emulate. Housewives in India and Malaysia put aside a handful of rice each time they cook to provide for the poor of their village, or urban neighbourhood, thus fulfilling the Islamic pillar of *zakat*. All in the name of God

Yet we have heard of the son of the Anglican priest in Iran who was murdered by a mob of youths. We read in the newspapers of cutting the hands of thieves and stoning adulterers. Some churches have been burned in Egypt and Indonesia. We regard with concern movements for an Islamic state, possibly in our own country.

How do we as Christians regard these phenomena among our Muslim neighbours ? How do we judge the movements of spirits in the religion of Islam that prompt men and women, on the one hand, to the heights of love and worship of God and fraternal service to their neighbours, and, on the other, to chauvinism, intolerance, and domination ? Is Islam a false religion, a preparation for the Gospel, or a faith which comes from God with its own value and place in God's saving work ?

In this paper, I would like to address some of these questions, and I must delimit its parameters at the start. I will not be attempting to open any new theological doors or engage in theoretical speculations.

*Thomas MICHEL, S.J., is a member of the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christians. This paper was prepared for the Consultation on Christian Presence Among Muslims in Asia, Varanasi, Nov. 26-Dec 4, 1983, organized by the FABC Offices of Ecumenical and Inter-religious Affairs and of Mission.

I hope to ground my presentation in the teachings of the Roman Catholic tradition, particularly the statements of the Second Vatican Council and those of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II. My intention is pastoral and designed to provide material for reflection and discussion among the pastors of the Churches of Asia. I will by necessity draw from my own experience in many encounters with Muslims in the Middle East and South East Asia. I will address the concept of dialogue, used so often in recent magisterial pronouncements, and attempt to relate it to the mission which Christ has given to those he has called to be his disciples.

Past Attitudes Towards Islam

As we know, the prevailing attitude of Christians has not always been one of dialogue. From the first centuries of Islam, there were Christian theologians, exemplified by St John Damascene, who considered Islam a heresy and that Muhammad was incorrectly taught the rudiments of the Christian faith by an eccentric monk. In Europe after the Crusades Christians thought Muslims worshipped Muhammad and their polemics picture Islam in the worst of terms, often with little regard for the truth. Some of those in the modern missionary movement viewed Muslims as lost souls who could not be saved unless they became Christians.

This is not to say that there were no Christians who saw Islam in a different light. Francis of Assisi, at the height of the Crusades, visited the Sultan in Egypt in peace and returned to Italy where he wrote the famous Canticle of All Creatures which praises God in phrases reminiscent of the Qur'an. Impressed by the Muslim call to prayer, he encourages the friars to have church bells announce the Christian services. More importantly, in his Rule of 1221, he instructed those friars who were to live among Muslims:

> The brothers can conduct themselves among them spiritually in two ways. One way is to avoid quarrels or disputes and be subject to every human creature for God's sake, so bearing witness to the fact that they are Christians. Another way is to proclaim the word of God openly, when they see that it is God's will.

At a recent Franciscan conference on Islam, friars from around the world noted that Francis did not send his brothers "to" Muslims, still less "against" Muslims, but "among" them. Their primary witness that they are Christians is shown in their peaceful avoidance of quarrels and disputes and their rejection of the drive for dominion and power. Then, if and when they see it to be God's will, they proclaim the Word openly.

It is not only in the charismatic vision of the Saint in which such openness is found, but also in the attitude of the official teachers of the Church. A century and a half before the time of Francis, in 1076, Pope Gregory VII sent a letter to the Andalusian monarch Al-Nasir, who had sent the Pope gifts and freed Christian prisoners. He wrote:

> The good God, Creator of all things, without whom we can do nothing or even imagine it, inspired this in your heart; he who illuminates every man coming into this world illuminated your mind in this. For almighty God, who wishes that all men should be saved and none lost, approves nothing in us so much as that man after loving himself should love his fellow, and that what he does not want done to himself he should not do to others. You and we owe this charity to ourselves especially because we believe in and confess one God, admittedly in a different way, and daily praise and venerate him, the creator of the worlds and ruler of this world

The Holy Father closed his letter by stressing his sincerity and wishing Al-Nasir health and blessings in this life and eternal happiness in the next:

> We ask with heart and mouth that after the long space of this life the same God will lead you into the bosom of blessedness of the most holy patriarch Abraham.

The Second Vatican Council

Thus, it was not something entirely new when the Second Vatican Council proclaimed:

> The Church has a high regard for Muslims, who worship God the One, living and subsistent, merciful and almighty, Creator of heaven and earth, who has spoken to men They strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan.... They esteem an upright life and worship God, especially by way of prayer, alms-giving, and fasting [1]

The Council Fathers taught also that Muslims are "included in God's plan of salvation". The document continues:

> In the first place are the Muslims, who profess to hold the faith of Abraham. Together with us they adore the one, merciful God, mankind's judge on the Last Day.[2]

In the Decree of the Church's Missionary Activity Christians are taught that Christ's disciples

> should know the people among whom they live and should establish contact with them, to learn by sincere and patient *dialogue* what treasures a bountiful God has distributed among the nations of the earth.[3]

The call to dialogue is often reiterated in the Council documents,[4] papal encyclicals, exhortations, and statements in the years since the

1. *Nostra Aetate*, 3.
2. *Lumen Gentium*, 16.
3. *Ad Gentes*, 11.
4. *Nostra Aetate*, 2; *Ad Gentes*, 16, 41; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, 14, 27, 29, 31; *Gaudium et Spes*, 92; *Christus Dominus*, 13.

Council, and in the declarations of the FABC and local episcopal conferences. We have, I believe, arrived at a stage where knowledge of such calls can be presumed and need not again be catalogued. Our purpose here is to centre our attention on how Christians can and should regard Islam as a religion and Muslims as believers in God. To this end, a brief look at the teaching of Popes Paul VI and John Paul II can serve as our starting point.

Pope Paul VI

In the Encyclical *Ecclesiam Suam* (1964), Pope Paul VI referred to Islam in these words:

> We refer to the adorers of God according to the conception of monotheism, the Muslim religion especially, deserving of our admiration for all that is true and good in their worship of God .... Honesty compels us to declare openly our conviction that there is but one true religion, the religion of Christianity .... But we do, nevertheless, recognize and respect the moral and spiritual values of the various non-Christian religions, and we desire to join with them in promoting common ideals of religious liberty, human brotherhood, good culture, social welfare, and civil order [5]

In this, Pope Paul took the Council documents a step further, for *Nostra Aetate* and *Lumen Gentium* spoke of *Muslims*, and made no reference to Islam as a religion. Here it is clearly expressed that the Islamic religion, like other religions, enshrines "moral and spiritual values" which are worthy of recognition and respect and even admiration for all that is true and good in its followers' worship of God. This recognition of what is good in Islam should be honestly accompanied by the expression on the part of Christians of our conviction of the truth of our own faith.

In 1967, Pope Paul repeated many of the same themes in his address to the grand Mufti of Istanbul. "We must express our esteem for Muslims", and "on this basis of common truths, we are called to promote together social justice, moral values, peace, and liberty." He asked "the abundance of God's blessings upon the Muslim community".

In Uganda in 1969, the same Pope "saluted the great communities of Muslims spread throughout the whole of Africa"; he expressed his profound respect for the "faith which they profess", and his hope that "what we possess in common serve to unite Christians and Muslims in an ever closer way, in an authentic fraternity". He felt certain that his Muslim hearers "would unite themselves to the prayers which we

5. *Ecclesiam Suam*, Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1964, pp. 69-70.

address to the Almighty that he grant to all African believers the desire for pardon and reconciliation which is so often encouraged in the Gospel and in the Qur'an".

Finally, in praising the Christian martyrs of Uganda, the Pope paid homage to the Muslims who had died in witness to their faith in that country.

> In celebrating the Catholic and Anglican martyrs, we also willingly celebrate the confessors of the Muslim faith who were the first to undergo death, in 1848, because they refused to transgress the precepts of their religion.

He concluded with the hope that his meeting with the Muslim leaders would be a first step in attaining "this unity to which God has demanded that they aspire".

The points to note which were made in these addresses by Pope Paul VI are that there exist truths held in common by the followers of the two religions, which should lead them to a unity, an authentic fraternity, which is demanded by God. He expressed respect not merely for Muslims as individuals, but also for the faith which they profess. Moreover, it is proper, in a sentiment reminiscent of that of Pope Gregory VII, to beg God's blessings upon the Islamic community, aware that Muslims and Christians are united in their prayer to God.

Pope John Paul II

When we turn to the teachings of the present Holy Father, it can be asserted without fear of contradiction that no Pope in history has devoted so much attention to the relations between Christians and Muslims as has Pope John Paul II Both in his addresses to Christians living in the midst of Muslims in Asia, Africa, the Middle East and Europe, as well as in his speeches to Muslims in the context of his travels to various Islamic countries, the present Pope has attempted to lay the bases for Christian-Muslim dialogue and the principles for living together among the followers of those two monotheistic faiths.

In order to understand fully John Paul II's teaching on Islam and relations with Muslims, it is important to appreciate his broader theological position on the other religions of the world. His overriding attitude is one of respect for the truth which others than Christians also possess. This respect for their valid spiritual experience must lead Christians to approach others, not merely with the expectation of what Christians can say and bring and give, but also of what they can learn from others and how they can be challenged and enriched by them.

In his first encyclical, *Redemptor Hominis*, the Pope speaks of the belief of the followers of non-Christian religions as being "the *effect of the Spirit of truth* operating outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body",[6] and elsewhere he says that the Holy Spirit "is mysteriously present in non-Christian religions and cultures".[7] This presupposes a view of other faiths far different from a neo-Barthian position which views non-Christian religions as the domain of Satan which must be brought under the reign of God, a theological stance which had previously dominated so much of Christian thinking towards other faiths.

In *Redemptor Hominis*, the Pope applies the statement in *Ad Gentes* (the missionary document of the Second Vatican Council) that "man is constantly worked upon by God's Spirit" to the belief of non-Christians itself. It is clear from *Redemptor Hominis* that John Paul II considers this action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of non-Christians to be operative not in spite of their religious adherance, but rather at its essence and foundation.

The Pope urges Christians to come into closer harmony with representatives of other religions through

> dialogue, contacts, prayer in common (and) investigation of the treasures of human spirituality, in which, as we know well, the members of these religions are not lacking.[8]

Christians' approach to those of other faiths should therefore be multifaceted, including not only formal and theological dialogue and interchange in the situations of daily life, but also a shared experience of prayer and the effort to become more aware of the values and insights contained in their spiritual traditions. He concludes that "it is a noble thing to have a predisposition for understanding every person, analysing every system and recognizing what is right".[9]

He declares that this does not mean that the Christian should "lose certitude about his own faith"; rather, the Christian has much to gain both in the realms of faith and morals, so that through dialogue his faith becomes deeper, richer.

> The firm belief of the followers of the non-Christian religions . . . can make Christians ashamed at being often themselves so disposed to doubt concerning the truths revealed by God and proclaimed by the Church and so prone to relax moral principles and open the way to ethical permissiveness.[10]

6. *Redemptor Hominis*, Vatican City: Tipografia Poliglotta Vaticana, 1979, p. 18.
7. Discourse to the Participants of the International Theological Congress of Pneumatology, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 26-3-1982.
8. *Redemptor Hominis*, p. 17.
9. *Redemptor Hominis*, p. 18.
10. Ibid.

Pope John Paul II developed this theme further in his discourse to the participants of the plenary meeting of the Vatican Secretariat for non-Christians in 1979. He stated:

> A Christian finds it of the highest interest to observe truly religious people, to read and listen to the testimonies of their wisdom and to have direct proof of their faith to the point of recalling at times the words of Jesus, "Not even in Israel have I found such faith" [11]

In the same address he added his views on the attitude which Christians should have towards believers of other faiths:

> Respect and esteem for the other and for what he has in the depths of his heart is essential to dialogue To this must be added discernment and a knowledge that is sincere and profound This last cannot be gained from books alone It calls for fellow-feeling and identification.

He cites St Paul's readiness to become all things to all persons "for the sake of the Gospel, that I may share in its blessings", and stresses that any dialogue can only be constructive and fruitful if there is love for those with whom we converse "The only truly perfect speech is that spoken in love"

The Primacy of Love

I believe that the practical implications of this papal teaching are far-reaching, because identification demands the efforts to feel and understand concepts, problems, and crises — in fact, all reality — through the eyes of the other. One who tries to identify with another in this way is no longer an outside observer and critic of their worldly and spiritual experience, but is, emotionally, a participant in what happens in their lives and how they view it This is even more the case when love is at the basis of the relationship. A Christian who has no love for Muslims (or members of other faiths) and their beliefs which lie at the heart of their religious self-understanding is not able to speak with much depth or even validity about their religion, and must undergo a "change of heart" before he is ready to undertake dialogue with them.

John Paul II is aware that many Christians are not prepared to enter into a genuine dialogue with people of other faiths. Ignorance of the real beliefs and practices of others, prejudices, half-truths and self-interest often stand in the way and prevent some Christians from appreciating the goodness and truth and devotion which others express through their faith. Thus he urges that "Education for dialogue with the followers of other creeds should form part of the training of

11. Discourse of the Pope to the Participants in the Plenary Meeting of the Secretariat for non-Christians, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 28-4-1979.

Christians, especially young Christians".[12] Christian parents and catechists often feel that they are not prepared to teach their children the basic teachings of Islam, and it is true that this formal instruction in the religion of another is best left to those who have specialized training in that. However, what the Holy Father is pointing towards seems to be something far simpler; every Christian parent, catechist, and parish priest can teach by word and example that God also loves Muslims, intends their salvation, and that there are many good and holy things in the Islamic religion.

Dialogue in the Mission of the Church

An attitude of dialogue in no way diminishes the Christian mission to proclaim the "mighty works of God", of what God has done "for the happiness and salvation of all at a particular time and in a particular man, whom he raised up to be our brother and Lord, Jesus Christ". Proclamation has its place in every situation of dialogue, and is in fact expected. Muslims and others are impelled to bear witness by word and deed to the guidance and hope they find in their faith. Similarly, a Christian "must always be ready to give an answer to those who ask the reason for the hope that is in us".

The Pope is here addressing what is for many of us in Asia the main issue. As Christians, we are called to recognize, respect, value, and grow by the truth and deep experience of God we find in the lives of our neighbours, while at the same time, as disciples of the risen Lord, we are called to bear witness to the Good News to which we have been called. How are these two aspects of our mission to be reconciled in the lives of individual believers, of the local Churches ?

The key seems to be the respect and esteem which is stressed in each of John Paul II's approaches to people of other faiths. Where there is genuine respect for the other and for his spiritual experiences, proclamation of our own faith commitment is no insult. In my own encounters with Muslims, they have often asked: "Since you obviously respect and love Islam, why don't you become a Muslim ?" I answer that I cannot become a Muslim because the deepest convictions which give direction to my life, the reason for all I do, the very basis for my desire to honour and serve others and to share a life with them is rooted in my faith in what God has done and said and continues to accomplish for mankind through Jesus Christ. When a person's knowledge of Jesus Christ and his relationship to him is his way of approaching God and knowing God's will for him, is the deepest truth which

12. Ibid.

he believes and by which he lives, is what gives him life, direction, hope — that person can only be a Christian.

I do not feel insulted when Muslims seek unity with me by sharing what is deepest and richest in their lives. Neither have I found Muslims angered, insulted, or even surprised in my natural desire to be one with them in the Christian faith which is the moving force and source of joy in my life. The true Christian and the true Muslim submit themselves to God's will, each according to his particular understanding of it.

In a genuine religious encounter marked by respect and love, the Christian and the Muslim normally remain committed to their respective faiths, but neither remains unchanged. God's Spirit is at work to call them anew to himself, to broaden and deepen their awareness of his constant and mysterious presence and movement in their lives. I can testify that I am a better Christian and priest today because of my many contacts with Muslims, and I hope that God has used our encounters to touch their lives as well. Pope John Paul II has asserted in his address to the bishops of North Africa that not infrequently have Christians profited in their own faith commitment by the witness given by their Muslim sisters and brothers.[13]

Using John Paul II's key of respect and love, we see that true sharing of life in dialogue and genuine proclamation are not incompatible alternatives in living the mission of the Church; rather, each element finds its place in the dialogue of life together. The problems arise in a type of evangelization which does not respect the other persons, their convictions, cultural traditions, and religious experience. Muslims are properly and understandably insulted by those who dismiss or negate the validity for them of the faith (*iman*), the religion (*din*), and the law (*shar'a*) of Islam. They consider it an unworthy manipulation and abuse when Christian works of *diakonia* towards the poor, the sick, the young and the displaced are used as tactics designed to separate Muslims from their beliefs. My experience in Asia is that this misuse of *diakonia*, as well as the false understanding of evangelization, is quickly becoming a thing of the past. Our works of *diakonia*, properly understood, are inspired by the example of Christ whose life of concern and service was directed primarily towards the needy, and are a sign and demonstration of God's love for all persons. On the other hand, the Islamic community should be aware that, with the assumption of greater political and economic power by

13. Address to the Bishops of North Africa on their "Ad Limina" Visit, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14-12-1981.

Muslims in recent decades, Christians in some places are subjected to subtle and explicit pressures to accept Islamic *da'wah* for reasons which have less to do with religious conviction than with economic and social factors.

Spiritual Values in Other Religions

Pope John Paul II, like Pope Paul before him, taught that Christians must recognize the moral and positive spiritual orientation which other religions offer their adherents. In this radio talk to the peoples of Asia, John Paul II declared that the Church

> pays homage to the many moral values contained in these religions, as well as to the potential for spiritual living which so deeply marks the traditions and the cultures of whole societies.[14]

To an ecumenical gathering of Christians, Muslims and Jews in Lisbon the Pope spoke similarly:

> These contacts of ours, dialogue, the appreciation of the undeniable treasures of spirituality in every religion, Christian fellowship and, when it is possible, prayer in common, can bring together the efforts to dispel the illusion of constructing a new world without God and the futility of a purely anthropocentric humanism.[15]

It is mankind's acknowledgement of the need for prayer, he states, which brings together and unites Christians and people of other religions. The God who is the object of mankind's prayer is one and the same, and the Spirit who inspires and guides such prayer is one.

> Even when for some, he is the great Unknown, he nevertheless remains always in reality the same living God. We trust that wherever the human spirit opens itself in prayer to this Unknown God, an echo will be heard of the same Spirit who, knowing the limits and weakness of the human person, himself prays in us and on our behalf, "expressing our plea in a way that could never be put into words".

Dialogue, the Task of All Christians

In his radio talk, the Pope concludes his views on inter-religious dialogue by asserting:

> All Christians must be committed to dialogue with the believers of all religions, so that mutual understanding and collaboration may grow, so that moral values may be strengthened, so that God may be praised in all creation.[16]

From these words we can see that dialogue is not the special mission for some Christians, while others act in a way which contradicts it and

14. Radio Talk to the Peoples of Asia, 4, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2-3-1981.
15. Discourse to Inter-religious Gathering in Lisbon, *L'Osservatore Romano* 14-5-1982.
16. Radio Talk, 5.

neutralizes its basic witness. Rather, dialogue is an attitude which must characterize the Christian community as a whole, whereby Christian people "cooperate with other believers in preserving all that is good in their religions and cultures, stressing the things that are held in common, and helping all people to live as brothers and sisters."[17]

To appreciate John Paul II's basic attitude towards other religions, two final points must be noted. Firstly, in their relations with people of other faiths, Roman Catholics must not try to "go it alone". The ecumenical quest for full unity has inter-religious consequences "that Christ may become ever more manifest in the love of his followers".[18] Secondly, dialogue cannot be limited to those who explicitly identify themselves with one or another religion. Christians must, said John Paul II in his radio talk,

> join hands with all men and women of good will who share a belief in the inestimable dignity of each human person They will work together in order to bring about a more just and peaceful society in which the poor will be the first to be served.

Christians and Muslims, Children of Abraham in Faith

With this general review of John Paul II's approach to other religions, we can turn directly to his views on Islam. His teaching about the faith of Muslims is an explicitation of what remained ambiguous in the Declaration *Nostra Aetate* and the Constitution *Lumen Gentium* The Conciliar documents cautiously declared that Muslims "associate themselves with the faith of Abraham" (*NA*, 3) and "profess to hold the faith of Abraham" (*LG*. 16). Both phrases leave open the possibility for a "restrictive" interpretation which would hold that, although Muslims consider themselves in the line of faith of Abraham, in fact we as Christians do not consider them as such.

In his discourse to the Catholic community in Ankara, the Pope states unequivocally: "They have, like you, the faith of Abraham in the one, almighty, and merciful God."[19] In his message to the President of Pakistan, the Pope refers to Abraham, "to whose faith Christians, Muslims, and Jews alike eagerly link their own."[20] In Lisbon, he said: "And Abraham, our common forefather, teaches all — Christians, Jews and Muslims — to follow the path of mercy and love."[21] In each

17. Radio Talk, 3.
18. Discourse to the Participants in the Plenary Meeting of the Secretariat for non-Christians.
19. Discourse of Pope John Paul II to the Catholic Community in the Chapel of the Italian Embassy in Ankara, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 3-12-1979.
20. Message to the President of Pakistan, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23-2-1981.
21. Discourse to Inter-religious Gathering in Lisbon.

case a parallel is drawn between the Islamic self-identification as descendents of Abraham and that of Christians.

The soteriological implications of this position in the light of the Pauline theology that "Abraham was saved through his faith" are great, and have not been thoroughly explored by theologians of religions. One might ask whether Muslims are not saved, in a manner analogous to the Jews, as children in faith of Abraham who are inheritors of the promises made to the patriarch. In any theological evaluation of Islam made by Roman Catholics, the relevance of such papal teachings is apparent and must be taken into consideration.

John Paul II seems to point in this direction when — again to the Catholic community of Ankara — he declares:

> Faith in God, professed by the spiritual descendants of Abraham — Christians, Muslims and Jews — when it is lived sincerely, when it penetrates life, is a certain foundation of the dignity, brotherhood and freedom of men and a principle of uprightness for moral conduct and life in society.[22]

In affirming the societal and moral effects of this faith, the Pope seems to be presuming that such faith is genuine and not a relationship to God which Muslims merely impute to themselves. To the Muslim community in Kaduna, Nigeria, the Holy Father told his audience: "I speak of these issues (of common concern) with you because you are Muslims, and like us Christians, you believe in the one God who is the source of all the rights and values of mankind".[23]

It is precisely this shared faith which is the foundation of dialogue and cooperation between Christians and Muslims. John Paul II urges Christians

> to consider *every day* the deep roots of faith in God in whom also your Muslim fellow citizens believe, in order to draw from this the principle of a collaboration with a view to the progress of man, emulation in good, the estension of peace and brotherhood in free profession of the faith peculiar to each one.[24]

What the Holy Father is recommending to Christians who live amidst Muslims or in an Islamic environment is a continuous, ongoing reflection ("every day") on the shared bases of faith in God between Christians and Muslims. This goes beyond a concept of dialogue which is solely the province of specialists or religious leaders, and thus marginal to the daily life of the Church, to an understanding of Islam which enriches our own appreciation of the sovereign presence of God who

22. Discourse to Catholic Community in Ankara.

23. Speech to the Community of the State of Kaduna and in a particular way to the Muslim Community, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 22-2-1982. Cf. also, Message to Representatives of the Muslim Community in France, Paris, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2/3-6-1980.

24. Discourse to Catholic Community in Ankara.

is continually deepening our call to be followers of Christ and open to the daily action of his Spirit.

In content, the Muslim's faith is an unconditional submission (in Arabic "islam"), on the model of Abraham, to the will of God. In Ankara, the Pope paraphrased *Nostra Aetate* in the words: "They (Muslims) strive to submit themselves without reserve to the hidden decrees of God, just as Abraham submitted himself to God's plan, to whose faith Muslims eagerly link their own" In the same speech he repeatedly referred to the epistles of Peter where it is written: "Through your faith, the power of God affords you safe conduct till you reach it, this salvation which is waiting to be disclosed at the end of time" (I Peter 1 5) If would seem that the Holy Father has intuited an important point of contact between the Christian's faith in God and that of the Muslim A comparative study of the Qur'anic understanding of faith with that expressed in the New Testament, particularly in the Petrine writings, might enrich believers in each religion.

Christian-Muslim Fellowship Based on Shared Faith in God and Worship

Muslims' obedience to God, he states, their "islam", and their commitment to be servants of God, link Christians with another passage from the first Epistle of Peter (I Peter 2. 16), and offer possibilities for the exploration of still further aspects of the faith shared by Christians and Muslims The Pope elaborated on this theme in his address to the representatives of the Muslim community in Davao, Philippines:

> I deliberately address you as "brothers!" whose efforts, whether people realize it or not, tend towards God and the truth that comes from him. But we are especially brothers in God, who created us and whom we are trying to reach, in our own ways, through faith, prayer and worship, through the keeping of his law and through submission to his designs.[25]

Even though we are often unaware of it, Christians and Muslims are drawn into a brotherhood whose basis is our common effort, each in our distinctive ways, to respond to God's action and message for us. Whether or not we want to admit it, we are brothers and sisters in God's design, a brotherhood grounded in our faith, worship, obedience and submission to God.

If the ultimate basis for dialogue and respect between Christian and Muslim is the shared elements of faith in the one and same God,

25. Discourse to the Representatives of the Muslim Community, Davao, 1, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 2-3-1981.

the ongoing impetus which makes possible such activity is the worship that each gives to God. In Kenya, the Holy Father said:

> The Catholic Church realizes that the element of worship given to the one, living, subsistent, merciful and almighty Creator of heaven and earth is common to Islam and herself, and that it is a great link uniting all Christians and Muslims [26]

Muslim worship of our God and theirs is to be revered and admired. Whether we are speaking about the daily prayer in which Muslims at five critical times of the day re-commit and surrender themselves to accepting and carrying out God's will, the month-long fast with its elements of commemoration, personal and communal renewal, brotherhood and forgiveness, or the poor tax paid by all faithful Muslims for the care of the disadvantaged in their midst, these acts of worship cannot leave Christians unaffected, for we believe that it is the God whom we love and who loves all mankind who is honoured and obeyed in their actions.

Shared Values Demand Collaboration

Common concerns and common values create spiritual bonds between Muslims and Christians.[27] Both are concerned to dedicate their lives to the service of God, worshipping him also through the daily actions and striving to make his will done on earth. The Pope affirms:

> When I think of this (Islamic) spiritual heritage and the value it has for man and for society, its capacity of offering, particularly to the young, guidance for life, filling the gap left by materialism, and giving a reliable foundation to social and juridical organization, I wonder if it is not urgent for Christians and Muslims to recognize and develop the spiritual bonds that unite us, in order to preserve and promote together for the benefit of all "peace, liberty, social justice, and moral values" [28]

Muslims and Christians are called to an "authentic service to humanity". Together they should

> promote more honesty and discipline in private and public life, greater courage and wisdom in politics, the elimination of political antagonism, and the removal of discrimination because of a person's race, colour, ethnic origin, religion, or sex.[29]

In this regard, the Pope expressed his admiration for the humanitarian efforts of the government and people of Pakistan to care for the great

---

26. Greeting to the Leaders of the Muslim Community in Kenya, 2, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 9-5-1980.
27. Address to the President and the Civil and Religious Authorities Present at the Airport before Leaving Pakistan, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 23-2-1981. Cf. also, Discours à l'Episcopat de Haute Volta, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 11-5-1980.
28. Discourse to Catholic Community in Ankara.
29. Speech to the Community of the State of Kaduna.

number of refugees in that country and pledged the cooperation of Christians in these efforts to make God's will done on earth.[30]

It is at the level of cultural and human issues where forms of collaboration are most apt and most needed. The Pope says that in the course of his travels he has "come to appreciate the rich cultural heritage"[31] of Islam, and that "the culture of Islam is something that merits attention and respect"[32] from Christians. For his part, he pledges to do everything possible to develop the bonds between Christians and Muslims, building a relationship of reciprocal esteem that results in a common witness to the world which is confronted by the dangers of materialism.[33]

Dialogue

All this requires dialogue, which the Pope constantly recommends in each of his teachings about Islam. But what does he mean by dialogue ? The concept of dialogue has fallen into disrepute among many Christians, Muslims and others because they identify it with sterile discussions on points of theology or social gatherings among religious leaders. A serious investigation of the points of convergence and divergence between the two religions has its own value in attempting to formulate precisely the beliefs of each vis-à-vis the other, just as simple social contacts have their place in counteracting negative prejudices which people form about "the unknown other" and in opening the door to deeper levels of sharing. But in these statements the Holy Father is saying that dialogue must go deeper than this. He is speaking about a daily effort of the whole Christian and Muslim communities to bear witness, in peace and mutual respect, to that which is finest in their respective religious commitments. This dialogue is the ideal, the goal, which must be slowly and painfully built up. A level of trust does not appear overnight.

> Such a dialogue is in the first place a question of friendship. One must know how to give dialogue time for progress and discernment. That is why it is surrounded by discretion out of a concern to be considerate with regard to the slowness of the evolution of mentalities. The seriousness of commitment in this dialogue is measured by that of the witness lived and borne to the values in which one believes.[34]

---

30. Message to the President of Pakistan.
31. Address to the President and the Civil and Religious Authorities, Pakistan.
32. Discourse to Representatives of Muslim Community, 3, Davao.
33. Greeting to Leaders of Muslim Community, 3, Kenya.
34. Address to Bishops of North Africa. Cf. also, Discorso alla presentazione al Santo Padre delle credenziali del nuovo Ambasciatore della Repubblica di Algeria, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 28/29-3-1983.

Elsewhere he refers to "Muslims and Christians living together as neighbours, with mutual respect constantly present in social life, with common action to promote the acceptance and defence of man's fundamental rights".[35]

In this connection, we can remember the similarity of approach to the question of dialogue between the teaching of the Holy Father and that which was stated by the Asian Bishops at the FABC Institute held in Kuala Lumpur in 1979.

> Christians living among Muslims should recognize the importance of dialogue with their Muslim brethren. For most Christians, this means what can be called a dialogue of life. This is the most essential aspect of dialogue, and it is accomplished by Christians and Muslims living together in peace. Each gives witness to the other concerning the values he has found in his faith, and through the daily practice of brotherhood, helpfulness, open-heartedness, and hospitality, each shows himself to be a God-fearing neighbour. The true Christian and Muslim offer to a busy world values arising from God's message when they revere the elderly, conscientiously rear the young, care for the sick and the poor in their midst, and work together for social justice, welfare and human rights. We encourage Christians to be ever more deeply involved in this dialogue of life.[36]

The possibility of freely-chosen conversion should not be eliminated from such encounters, as the Holy Father reminds us,[37] while at the same time Christians and Muslims are exhorted to "fully live" and "hold fast" to their convictions.[38]

In all of this, the sound guideline is love.

> In dialogue, speech does not become constructive and fruitful without love Speech and love are the true vehicle of communication. The only truly perfect speech is that spoken in love [39]

Statements of Christians about Islam, and those of Muslims about Christianity, which are not formed, guided and directed by love for the other do not attain the depths of truth to which the one God has called us.

Mutual Dependence of Christians and Muslims

Christians and Muslims, according to John Paul II, cannot consider themselves exclusive and totally self-sufficient communities.

35. Greeting to Leaders of the Muslim Community in Ghana, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 10-5-1980.
36. Second Bishops' Institute for Inter-religious Affairs, Kuala Lumpur, 21 November 1979.
37. Address to Bishops of Mali, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 14-12-1981.
38. Gruss des Papstes an die Muslime in Deutschland, *L'Osservatore Romano*, 17/18-11-1980
39. Discourse to the Participants at the Plenary Meeting of the Secretariat for non-Christians.

They have a need for each other, on a human and societal level, and the world itself needs to see reconciliation and "salaam" between these two monotheistic communities. To the Muslims of the Philippines the Pope said:

> I wish you to be convinced of the fact that your Christian brothers and sisters need you and they need your love. And the whole world, with its longing for greater peace, brotherhood and harmony, needs to see fraternal coexistence between Christians and Muslims [40]

Divinely Guided Humanism

The Pope's sympathetic attitude and his eagerness to establish and develop close relations with Muslims derives from his awareness of a true humanism taught by both religions, one based on the dignity of mankind as the beloved creature of God and who reflects God's glory. For both Muslims and Christians, humankind is not an automaton, the product of an economic or psychological determinism, nor is man a plaything of the gods cast adrift in an absurd universe. Rather, he is the masterpiece of God's creative activity with innate dignity and purpose.

> For the Muslim, the universe is destined to be subject to man as the representative of God. The Bible affirms that God ordered man to subdue the earth, but also to "till it and keep it" (Gen 1: 27). As God's creature, man has rights which cannot be violated, but he is equally bound by the law of good and evil which is based on the order established by God. Thanks to this law, man will never submit to any idol. The Christian keeps to the solemn commandment, "You shall have no other gods before me" (Ex 30: 3). On his side, the Muslim will always say "God is greatest" [41]

Challenges Facing Christians and Muslims

In this brief survey of the recent teaching of the Church on how Christians should regard the followers of Islam, local and national problems and tensions cannot be treated. Situations are too diverse to formulate concrete solutions. In Asia, the relations between Christians and Muslims vary greatly, from those of deep mutual enrichment and numerous examples of collaboration to those of competition, suspicion. distrust, and open enmity. In some countries, Muslims are a small minority struggling to maintain their religious and cultural identity in the midst of a predominantly Christian population. Elsewhere, perhaps more often, Christians find themselves as tiny communities in nations where social and political life is dominated by Islamic ideals. In other places, both Christians and Muslims are minorities struggling to pursue their convictions and ideals amidst still other

40 Discourse to Representatives of Muslim Community, 5, Davao.
41. Discourse to Catholic Community, Ankara.

religious traditions. Everywhere, there are the new challenges brought by modern international culture, which in both its capitalist and socialist forms raises issues and problems that neither the Christian nor the Islamic religion can ignore. Both must confront the pressing issues of war — particularly the spectre of nuclear holocaust — poverty, social and personal morality, and the liberation of peoples from structures of oppression.

We live, as we know, in an age of polarization, and people do not want to hear about dialogue. After a brief period of enthusiasm in the late 60s and the early 70s, difficulties which appeared insurmountable arose, while tangible results seemed both ephemeral and superficial. People discovered that old resentments, enmities and suspicions died hard. Moreover, religious sentiments tend to follow the mood of the times. As a Methodist minister from Ghana put it: "These are mean times; a hard spirit is afoot in the world." The north-south dialogue is silent, east-west detente is in shambles. Militarization is everywhere on the increase, and the principles of national security are taking precedence over those of human dignity and human rights. Ethnic, linguistic, racial and religious distinctions have brought one nation after another to civil unrest and violence, as peoples become more and more convinced that they cannot live with their neighbours in peace. I have heard Christians say: "How can we dialogue with Muslims when they are not sincere about it ?", and have heard Muslims ask the same about Christians. I have heard both deny the possibility of dialogue with Hindus and heard Hindus claim the same about Buddhists. Christian-Muslim relations in the Middle East, and the relations of both with Jews in Israel, are at a new low and do not offer grounds for optimism. One religious and ethnic and national group after another is opting to press its own interests and let others worry about themselves.

The problem is that there are always grounds for the criticism of others. Both Christians and Muslims often betray their religious values and ideals. Christians aware of their own sinful history, both personal and communal, will not be surprised to see that there are Muslims who hate, who are intolerant, who are chauvinistic, who are hypocritical, and who act without regard for their neighbours of other faiths. This is not something characteristic of Islam or unique to them, but rather reflects the universal human condition.

Nevertheless, neither community can await an idealized partner for dialogue to begin. As Catholics, we cannot postpone our taking up the challenges of Church teaching until the times change, for history shows us that the times will not change until we change them.

We must creatively yet realistically find the doors which can be opened now, while waiting patiently and in hope for result to appear.

Pope John Paul II is moving against the spirit of the times by continuing to stress the urgency of respect, brotherhood, dialogue and cooperation His appeals to Christians and Muslims are all the more prophetic because an increasingly polarized world is preaching the folly of the Islamic and Christian values to which he points. His calls to mutual esteem will be consigned to the realm of platitudes or public relations unless, despite misgivings and much evidence to the contrary, Christians and Muslims pursue their efforts to build a level of trust and regard the other basically as persons of good will devoted to carrying out God's will, but who, nevertheless, still display weakness, arrogance and selfishness.

However, the secret which God has hidden from the great and powerful he has revealed to the small and the weak. Throughout Asia, in every country, some Christians and some Muslims, as well as people of other faiths, have begun to cross the divisions which separate us, have begun honest and deep communication, and have begun to work together for the good of all It is incumbent on us to search out and support such efforts and hold them up as examples to others. Our roles of leadership must be at the service of our communities to broaden perspectives and explore new possibilities for peace, coexistence, and mutual help and enrichment. In all this, it is essential that Christians and Muslims maintain and deepen their spiritual union with God through prayer and worship A Lebanese Muslim told me recently: "I am convinced that the only thing which will save this world is Muslims, Christians, and others who keep praying."

Christian Attitude Towards Muslims

The magisterium does not give specific answers to questions of a local nature. Its purpose, rather, is to guide our thinking, to form our attitudes as we reflect on our responses to the needs of our time and place. The daily crises and tensions we face are not resolved by the teaching of the Church; rather, through the statements of the Councils and the Popes Catholics can learn how to shape our views and our actions so that we are "thinking with the Church". Our reflections and discussions here must revolve around the question: Do our attitudes and those of our people towards Muslims reflect the thinking contained in these recent teachings ? Do Catholics at the parish level know their own tradition concerning how they should regard and live among Muslims ? Have our local Church bodies set

up effective, functioning structures for preparing and educating our Catholics for dialogue, esteem and cooperation with Muslims ? What are the concrete problems which we face as we try to guide our people in opening themselves to Muslims ?

We might conclude with the exhortation of the Asian bishops who participated in BIRA II which studied the relations between Christians and Muslims in Asia:

> What the participants of BIRA II are calling for is dialogue This means a change of attitude towards Islam In the past, the attitude of Christians towards Muslims has not always followed the example of love given by their teacher and saviour, Jesus Christ We exhort Catholics in Asia to let their lives be guided by the spirit of the Second Vatican Council "Although in the course of the centuries many quarrels and hostilities have arisen between Christians and Muslims, this most sacred Synod urges all to forget the past and to strive sincerely for mutual understanding On behalf of all mankind, let them make common cause of safegarding and fostering social justice, moral values, peace and freedom "

Being vs Having

Following Christ in a Consumer Society. The Spirituality of Cultural Resistance By John Francis KAVANAUGH *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books,* 1981 Pp xix-167 $ 6 95

J F. Kavanaugh is a Jesuit priest and professor of philosophy at St Louis University, USA In this book he brings critique and discernment to bear upon the American way of life. How does the spirit of Christ acting in his followers today judge and act in such a society?

He begins with Marxism and its relationship to Christian thinking and living. Marxism arose from a Jewish-Christian background One could say it is a secularized form of the Christian ideals Then follows an analysis of the cultural, social and economic realities prevailing in N. America. There is, he rightly exposes, rampant depersonalization as a result of a consumer culture. Even the body and sexual life are reduced to commodities.

Too much possessiveness or the desire to accumulate wealth leads to a kind of idolatry, whereby real human values are turned upside down If modern culture is to remain human, a more personalizing approach is imperative. This can be achieved by focusing on Christ. The story of Israel, wavering between God and the gods, between covenant and betrayal, is brought to bear on the issue

The author has no doubt that a renewed reading of the Gospel and the close following of Christ offer the most efficacious remedy to the present ills, not only on the personal but also on the social plane. After quoting Matthew 25 he writes· "Marx in his wildest dreams, humanists in their most articulate flights, secularists in their most vaunted claims, cannot approach the revolutionary, the humanistic reaches of that statement" (p 82).

An examination of the whole of Christian life and its means to fulfilment follows in a rather classical and traditional manner. But — and here lies the author's merit — it is marked with an insistance on counter-culturation For there one finds the crux of the problem. The quest for Christian holiness always demands a basic detachment.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Consultation on Christian Presence among Muslims in Asia

(*Varanasi*, 26 *November*-4 *December*, 1983)

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

AT a number of meetings organized over the past years by the Federation of Asian Bishops Conferences, the need had been felt increasingly for a well-prepared Consultation on Christian Presence among Muslims in Asia. Its purpose would be (a) to ponder the varying life situations of Muslims in various countries of Asia; (b) to discern the different influences affecting Christian-Muslim relationships and, finally, (c) to suggest new orientations and action.

Sixteen archbishops and bishops, five sisters, three lay persons, a Methodist pastor and twenty-two priests from eleven Asian countries met from November 26th to December 4th at Nav Sadhana (Varanasi), the Regional Pastoral Centre of Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan.

During the year preceding the Consultation the participants had been sent the short *Introduction to Islam* published by the Henry Martyn Institute in Hyderabad (A P.) and eleven preparatory papers written by specialists in the field. These papers dealt, for instance, with popular Islam; the spiritual dimension of Islam; Islam as a missionary religion; Islamic revival; Islam and liberation; Islam and human rights; women in Islam and with the Christian-Muslim relationship in past and present.

Moreover, 30 of the 46 participants took up the offer to join the *exposure programme* organized during the three days preceding the actual Consultation. This programme consisted largely of visiting various important and significant groups of Muslims in a number of institutions, to listen to them and to exchange with them on questions of mutual interest. During the first day in Delhi the group met the staff and research students of the Institute of Islamic Studies at Jamia Millia Islamia, a well-known Muslim institution of higher learning which was founded in the 1920's by a group of nationalist Muslims close to Mahatma Gandhi. From the Jamia they went to visit the Indian Institute of Islamic Studies so magnificently housed in Hamdardnagar, South Delhi. They also visited, on the same campus, the museums and laboratories of the Institute for the History of Medicine where the age-old system of Graeco-Arabic medicine is studied and creatively developed. This medical system is known in India as Yunani Medicine.

The afternoon and evening was spent in the popular Muslim quarter of Nizamuddin, in the vicinity of the shrine of one of the most popular

Muslim saints, Nizamuddin Aulia (d. 1323) There, in the Banglewali Mosque originated the *Tablighi Jamaat* or Faith Movement of Maulana Muhammad Ilyas (1885-1944), a by now world-wide dynamic movement of Muslim reform and renewal. After being present at the afternoon prayer service, the group mixed, over a cup of tea, with workers of the movement who had been on mission in different countries and who could converse in English. Then, after offering flowers at the shrine and attending the short ritual of prayers performed there daily at the time of sunset, the group was invited to the Khanqah (Sufi hospice) of Khwaja Hasan Nizami Sani, the *pir* (master) of a branch of the Chishti order of Sufis. Professor N. A. Faruqui of Delhi University, a member of the order, spoke about Sufism as an integral dimension of Islam and about the Quranic foundations of Sufism. Then, Khwaja Saheb himself demonstrated and explained some of the basic rites and principles shaping the life of this order.

The second day in Agra was spent in visiting two outstanding monuments of Mughal history and architecture, the palace city of Akbar in Fatehpur Sikri and the Taj Mahal, Emperor Shahjahan's gift of love to his wife Mumtaz Mahal. The morning of the final day in Lucknow was spent in a two-hour visit of India's second-biggest madrasa, the Nadwatul Ulama which also houses an important Academy of Research and Writing. Members of the group were able to meet the Muslim seminarians in their hostels and to talk with them about their life and interests. Quite a number of the students turned out to hail from Asian countries like Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Bangladesh and thus were happy to talk with some of the delegates in their mother tongue. A young lecturer introduced the group to the history of the institution and a guided tour of the library.

After an introductory talk by a Shiite citizen of Lucknow, the delegates visited the three most famous Imambaras of the city, beautifully constructed Shi'a buildings for holding mourning sessions, especially during the month of Muharram.

The *Consultation* itself lasted for a full week. The first two days were spent in reacting to the two keynote addresses. One, by Cardinal Cordeiro of Karachi, dealt with Church and Islam: the role of religion in the salvation of man, Muslim-Christian relationships over the years and fears and hopes for the future. The other keynote address, by Terence Farias, dealt with areas of convergence of Christianity and Islam. The workshops during those two days made an effort to let the participants share their personal attitudes, feelings and basic ideas about Muslims and to become aware of the religious values in the life of Muslims. On the third day the historian Professor Qeyamuddin Ahmad of Patna University, a good friend of some of the resource persons of the Consultation, addressed the delegates on Christian-Muslim relations, from a Muslim perspective. His talk was marked by frankness and constant reference to concrete situations of Christian-Muslim relationship as he has experienced them in the more distant and the recent past in Bihar. During the remaining working

days of the Consultation four workshops addressed themselves to the following four areas:

(1) Muslim Prayer and Spirituality. Ways of Explaining the Christian Faith to Muslims.

(2) Present Day Forms and Movements in Islam.

(3) Living Among Muslims. Women in Islam.

(4) Joined Efforts to Promote a More Just Social Order.

Each of the workshops had been prepared by two resource persons. The reports of these, together with the overall report of the Consultation and the final message will be published in book form soon.

The *Message* is in two parts Part one offers the views of the Consultation on important aspects of the Muslim-Christian encounter, whereas part two spells out a number of concrete pastoral recommendations The Consultation acknowledges that "no religious experience of individual or community is complete unless it be open to complementary elements in the faith experience of others." God's initiative is seen to be active in other living faiths.

> Thus the genuine beliefs and practices of Muslims form the vehicles of God's favour to them and constitute the basis of their human condition and action The dynamic impact of the character of Muhammad and of the Quran on Muslims throughout their history is something which a Christian cannot overlook . Through contact with people of other faiths we become more aware of the fulness of Christ's salvific work ...
>
> Christians and Muslims can help one another to attain deeper experience of communion in God by means of an outgoing and generous life We can show Muslims by our example that one can really accept, appreciate, and collaborate with people of other faiths without compromising one's own Irreconcilable theological or doctrinal differences can coexist with sincere human and religious encounter.

The service of the peoples of Asia in the social, economic and political field is seen as a meeting point for Muslims and Christians. Dialogue and evangelization are judged to be "by no means incompatible".

> In moments of true sharing among people of different faiths, each speaks of those things which are deepest and most meaningful, for us Christians this means proclaiming the reasons for the hope we have and him who is the model of our love. When this is done in sincerity and respect, Muslims are not offended by this witness As people who hold their own faith as a treasure to be disclosed and an invitation (*da'wah*) to others, they may be expecting such announcement from their Christian friend .
>
> The goal of this inter-personal dialogue is an enrichment which enables both participants to purify and deepen their respective faith commitments and thus become open to ever abundant movements of God's grace.

The Message stresses that the discovery of the true convergences and divergences between Christianity and Islam is a task which involves "arduous and patient collaboration between scholars of the

two religions who are soundly grounded in a theological understanding of their own faith as well as in the study of each other's world views."

The difficulties of living together in the varying situations of Asian countries are acknowledged.

> At times Christians are aware, and may themselves even be victims, of Muslims living in a way which does not reflect God's loving will for all people. Desire for privileges, ill-treatment of women and non-Muslims, and severe punishment of law-breakers are examples of this
>
> In such situations it is essential that Christians realize that God in his providence has given them a special call to live in circumstances which require great faith and dependence on him.
>
> However, lest we Christians be guilty of unfair judgment, we should remember the history of the Church with its injustice, intolerance, and greed. We must be conscious also that in places governed by Christians, similar wrongs still occur today, and in some places it is the Muslims who are the victims.

In living together Christians and Muslims ,"can challenge one another to live their respective faiths more fully". Muslims, for instance, challenge, Christians in the areas of prayer life, fasting and charity. Also Christians are challenged to realize more effectively that God's love is not limited by communal or national bonds. "When we strive to imitate Jesus who 'went about doing good', we are in effect meeting the Quranic challenge to compete with one another in good deeds."

The revival of Islam creates "a particular set of problems" for the Christian. One Christian fear concerns the status of Christians when Islamic states are created. The consultation urges Christians to express their concerns and come to a greater understanding of the Muslim movements of revival and reform "through continual frank and open interchange with those actively involved in Islamic reform".

> Muslim reformers can be invited to outline their goals and programmes so that Christians may obtain a clearer view of the means and ideals of Islamic reform, rather than having to rely on the often superficial and distorted impression given through the media.

Inculturation, finally, is conceived as "the existential way a Christian lives and witnesses to his faith in the concrete religious, social and cultural milieu in which providence places him".

> In a predominantly Muslim cultural situation the Church tries to live, think, feel, speak and worship in ways which spring from faith and the religio-cultural heritage of the people. Only in such a community can those Muslims who come to visit or to join us feel at home. In our attempts at inculturation we should always keep in mind the legitimate sensibilities and religious feelings of the Muslims.

The *pastoral recommendations* stress the need for the teaching of Islam and of a renewed theology of religions to people at the parish and university level as well as in houses of religious formation. It recommends the study and collaboration between Christians and Muslims

on social issues, including family life and law, and the rights of women. It challenges to evolve creatively ways for fostering good neighbourly relations by, for example, the exchange of greetings, common celebrations on the occasion of festivals, mutual support and help at the time of suffering and on the occasion of calamities. It encourages the exploration of appropriate expressions of Christian faith and worship in predominantly Islamic environments and, finally, stresses the need for daily prayer for an increase in love and understanding and for mutual enrichment, at appropriate times like that of the five-time Muslim ritual prayer and on Fridays.

One does not have to be a prophet to predict that the reflections and recommendations of this important Consultation will come to fruit only if in the various countries and regions of Asia qualified and committed persons come forward who are willing and able to reach out, in and with their Churches, to their Muslim neighbours and are able to act as mediators and reconcilers between the two communities of believers.

Martyr of Racial Equality

Martin Luther King Jr.: The Making of a Mind. By John J. ANSBRO *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp. xvi-352. $ 17.95.

Martin Luther King was the conscience of America. His violent death as a martyr of social and racial equality has kept his memory alive. He died that Christians at last might live up to their ideal of love.

Who were the thinkers, the religious, social, ethical philosophers, who most influenced King? This is the question which "The Making of a Mind" sets out to answer and answers successfully. M. L. K. belonged to the Baptist Church and became one of its outstanding ministers. As a seminarian he frequented mostly two theological institutions, the Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania, and the Boston University School of Theology. From the start he was a voracious reader, remarkable for his discerning mind.

His thought and plans for action were centred on the Gospel of Love, *Agape*. He had realized that Love was the core message of Christianity. It was for him "universal, dangerous, excessive". Racism appeared to him one of the greatest denials of Love. King did not only denounce 'white racism', i.e., the segregation imposed by the white people, but also the racism of movements among his own, like the Black Power.

Early in his seminarian's life, King discovered Gandhi's personality. He fell almost at once under his magnetic influence. He became a Gandhian, consciously and painfully, yet did not agree with all the ideas and practices of the Mahatma. For example, he did not share Gandhi's "conception of the role of asceticism in the practice of non-violence" (p 145).

On matters pertaining to non-cooperation with government, King was greatly impressed by Henry D. Thoreau's essay "On the Duty of Civil Disobedience". But he had no intention of becoming a rebel; nor did he incite the blacks to rebellion. He loved America deeply; he accepted by and large its political and economic system, though not without reservations. He wanted through non-violent means to amend defects, suppress abuses, and above all to change the mentality of sinful men.

King was basically a personalist in his approach to social realities. He never admitted any system where human beings were either left unprotected or used as tools at the service of an ideology.

Thanks to the author's thorough and skilful handling of all his sources, King's intellectual foundations stand out in full light. His views and his action on behalf of justice are thereby considerably clarified. His was a big heart, but neither was his mind small.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Notes

A Christian Perspective on Islam

The reader of the book by Michael Nazir-Alli,[1] at present Provost of the Anglican Cathedral of Lahore, is greatly helped by the author's clear delimitation of his aim in writing it. The book does not set out to add another 'general introduction' to Islam to the excellent ones that already exist, written by scholars of varying qualification and for readers of varying background. Nor does the author wish his work to be regarded as outlining a particular approach to Islam. Such works, too, exist already in good number and quality. Instead, he has "tried to present an appreciation (using the word in the sense of critical appraisal) of facets of Islam from the standpoint of one who is Christian with a Muslim background living in a Muslim context" (p. 7). He expressly wants the work to "be taken. . . .as a personal evaluation of Islam by one who has studied Islam reasonably closely and whose attitude is sympathetic and critical at the same time" (p 8). Moreover, the author, from the outset, acknowledges candidly his limited competence in a number of areas of his vast subject. He, furthermore, knows himself largely dependent, as far as written sources are concerned, on a selected set of secondary sources in English, Persian and Urdu. Keeping these indications in mind, as well as the author's Muslim background and present position in the Christian community in Pakistan, the book — written throughout in an elegant and succinct style — is of great interest which, indeed, it does not disappoint.

In the first of the eight chapters, after indicating the most important factors influencing the 'genesis' of the religion of Islam — the Christian environment, the Jewish presence, the pagan background — the author very briefly indicates where he sees the origin of Islam. It is the 'awareness', the experience of a 'revelation' gained by Muhammad during meditations in a cave on Mount Hira. The reviewer fails, though, to understand why some remarks in this chapter on the reasons of Muhammad for not becoming a Christian or a Jew, are put under the sub-heading 'Manichaean Nationalist Ideas'.

In chapter 2, 'Development', the author tries to cover, within hardly 40 pages, a very vast field. Muhammad as 'the Lord of Medina', 'the Righteous Caliphs and others', 'Law and lawyers', 'the Development of Theology', 'Mysticism' and, finally, 'Christian Influences on Muslim Theology'. It is clear that he has to be very selective in the choice of events chosen for comment. On balance it would seem that in his choice comments of a critical nature prevail so that one is felt — perhaps, objectively speaking, incorrectly — wondering whether the

1. *Islam: A Christian Perspective*. By Michael NAZIR-ALI. *Exeter, The Paternoster Press*, 1983. P. 185. 4.80.

remarkable religious and spiritual ferment at work in this development has found sufficient appraisal. This question arises precisely because the 'material' and 'profane' elements and conditions of history as they were shaped and in turn have shaped the religious life and ideas of Muslims, seem to be largely absent from the consciousness of the author. He also depends much on two undoubtedly original yet at the same time somewhat one-sided authors, Tor Andrae and his assessment of the Christian influences on Islam and R. C. Zaehner and his peculiar perception of the mystical dimension of Islam. Moreover, at times the author strays far away from the subject under discussion into sweeping generalizations and uncalled-for intermezzos of dubious scholarly value.

The remarks in chapter 3 relating to 'the growth of a (sic!) Muslim culture' concentrate disproportionately on philosophy and science and follow largely, at times almost blindly, the overall vision of the intellectual development of Islam as put forward by Allama Iqbal. In contrast, the chapters on 'Modern Revival' and, The Reconstruction of Religious Thought' provide, on a few pages, good summaries and insights concerning some outstanding liberal Muslim thinkers of the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century as well as on 'the Turkish experiment' and on the basic nature of so-called Islamic socialist thinking. However, so little is said abou the creative and at times daring efforts of Muslim thinkers since World War II, for instance in Indonesia, India, North and West Africa as well as Western Europe and Northern America that whatever is critically pointed out by the author on 'the Return to Fundamentalism' in chapter 6 — which does include a short section on the contemporary eclipse of Liberalism — will be all too easily generalized and applied to the whole of contemporary Islamic reality. In other words, the perspective of the author, here, when 'gazing into Jamshid's cup' (chapter 7), comes across as a somewhat limited, too much Pakistan-centred one. After all, not all Muslim-majority countries are equally intensely 'Muslim' and a substantial portion of contemporary Muslims live in minority situations.

The final chapter on 'The Christian Presence' in Muslim countries — again, the context is rather a selected number of such countries — makes several valid and important points and may be considered the most precious part of the book Nazir-Ali does well in stressing the 'little-publicized' achievement of the Christians belonging to ancient Churches. Eminent personalities from among those Christian communities, like St John of Damascus and the Nestorian Patriarch Timothy, "maintained excellent relations with their Muslim rulers and yet, at the same time, made a vigorous defence of the Christian faith *vis-à-vis* Islam." The author rightly points out the "failing of western writers to persist in understanding the historical phenomenon of Christianity's encounter with other faiths in terms of the modern western (both Christian and non-Christian) encounters with world religions other than Christianity or Judaism" (p. 145).

Another pertinent submission of the author is that to refrain persistently from the effort "to persuade the other partner of the truth

of the Christ-faith"— in the overall context of encounter and dialogue — is nothing short of "an utterly unnatural posture". He rightly adds "that a Muslim scarcely ever has much hesitation in affirming what he believes to be the truth and in trying to persuade others that it is indeed the truth" (p. 148). So Nazir-Ali urges: "The maintenance and development of an element of 'discursive dialogue' in Christian-Muslim relations seems to me to be necessary if other forms of dialogue are going to succeed" (ibid.).

The author's arguments for the continuing need for expatriate Christian workers in the life of Christian Churches in Muslim lands, breathe a truly Catholic spirit (cf. pp. 151-156). They render all the more forceful his critical observations regarding the persisting of an 'imperialist' mentality "of many western missionaries" in their reluctance "to take a back seat and to let the nationals manage the affairs of the local church". Equally insightful are the author's remarks on the convert from Islam. Nazir-Ali pleads convincingly against the of late much publicized idea of developing purely convert churches.

Taking into account the renewed view, in faith, of the Church as pilgrim — together and amidst other faiths and faith traditions — towards the Kingdom, one misses in this chapter, and as an underlying conviction in the book as a whole, an understanding of the Church's role not only in calling all men and women to the explicit discipleship of Christ and fellowship of Christians but also of her role in simultaneously and critically affirming and of furthering in those other traditions whatever is of Christ and is Kingdom-like and therefore conduces to realizing the eschatological fulfilment promised by God in Christ to all peoples.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Ahmadiyya Doctrine of God

The Ahmadiyya Movement in Islam takes its name from the founder of the movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, who lived in Qadian, Punjab, India, from 1835-1908. Organized in 1889, the movement has exerted a great influence within and outside the fold of Islam. Today, the Ahmadiyya maintains missionary centres in more than forty countries, in Asia, Europe, Africa and the Americas. Over the past decades not a few Christians, many of them well-educated, have joined the ranks of this movement. The Ahmadiyya hit the headlines when, a few years back in Pakistan, the movement was declared non-Muslim. Visitors to Kashmir may have been wondering about the Ahmadiyya's claim that Jesus, after surviving the ordeal of his crucifixion, travelled eastward to the valley of Kashmir, "where he preached and lived to a ripe old age and was finally buried in a tomb on Khanyar Street, Srinagar, after a natural death" (p. 76).

Intellectually, the movement has made significant efforts to render Islamic faith and belief relevant, attractive to modern man. In this

effort they have put forward, above all and with new emphases, what is the central teaching of Islam, the doctrine of the One and Unique God. Thus, as H. J. Otten points out in a recent book,[1] an effort at understanding this doctrine of Islam, in the special colouring of the Ahmadiyya, "will enable the Christian to appreciate the *need* for his witness, the *difficulties* which lie behind a Muslim's reception of that witness, and the special *areas* of Muslim life and thought where that witness may have special validity" (p. vii). The author is furthermore convinced that by trying to clarify the issue of monotheism and Christian Trinity "Christians will come to a deeper appreciation and understanding of their own doctrine of God and be helped to lead their Muslim friends into a faith relationship with God who creates, saves and sanctifies" (pp. ix-x).

The first, substantial chapter analyses with clarity the Ahmadiyya Muslim doctrine of God. It inquires into its sources, its arguments for the existence of God, his names, his unity and attributes and into its treatment of the problem of evil. Of special interest here is the Ahmadiyya's emphasis on the divine attribute of *Master* As they explain this attribute, it enables them to temper God's justice with mercy. B. Mahmud Ahmad, the third head of the movement, explains: "In fact, God is not like a judge bound by the Law to deal with men according to their deeds. But he is *malik* or Master of his creatures and Master of his law as well as he can forgive the sins of his servants as and when he pleases." "By calling God 'just', M. Ahmad adds in typical, polemical vein, "the Christian Church had to enlist the aid of the so-called redeemer who, by his supposed death on the Cross, should atone for the sins of men to satisfy God's attribute of justice" (quoted on p. 25). This same teaching also enables the Ahmadiyya, *vis-a-vis* the Hindu teaching on an almost endless cycle of reincarnation, to highlight God's power to bestow more reward than is merited, and to declare as unnecessary an atonement as held by the Christians (cf. p. 22).

Whereas the Ahmadiyya authors refer frequently to man's love for God, God's love for man is mentioned rarely, as a love, furthermore, "which comes into action when man's love reaches out first" (p. 26).

A significant, further new emphasis, if not departure, from traditional Sunni teaching, is the Ahmadiyya belief, "that God reveals himself through the lives of men. The plural form is important here. Muhammad is one of the men; Jesus, with some revervations. . . .is another... But in Ahmadiyya Islam the foremost manifestation of God's attributes, at least according to the Qadian/Rabwah group, is Mirza Ghulam Ahmad" (p. 37). The author qualifies the Ahmadiyya emphasis as "actually a somewhat moderate form of Islamic mysticism" (p. 45) and, further, as "an incarnational type of thinking" (p. 38). Critically, he suggests a certain inconsistency here, "of holding to the

---

1. **The Ahmadiyya Doctrine of God.** By Henry J. OTTEN. *Hyderabad, Henry Martyn Institute of Islamic Studies*, 1983. Pp. xi-126. (No price given.)

absolute uniqueness of God's attributes and the manifestation of those attributes in persons" (p. 45).

Chapter II briefly discusses, where in its theological, mystical and rationalist content, Ahmadiyya teaching on God goes beyond the pale of accepted Muslim orthodoxy. The anti-Christian polemic of the Ahmadiyya is lucidly analysed in chapter III. Otten presents the gist of their statements on the Trinity, the divine sonship, the sinlessness of Jesus, the atonement, the resurrection of Christ, and the Holy Spirit. He skillfully separates in these areas of their polemical attack "the Quranic basis" from "the Ahmadiyya amplification", and thus carefully prepares the ground for the crowning of his study in chapter IV where — on the basis of a sound knowledge of the Christian theological tradition, viewed from a decidedly Lutheran perspective — an overall assessment is offered of the Ahmadiyya doctrine of God. Its "balance of transcendence and immanence", its "emphasis on human responsibility" and its "moral motivation" are singled out as positive aspects, whereas its 'simplicity', 'appeal to reason', 'syncretism' and 'universalism' are viewed as 'appealing', in other words "attracting to Ahmadiyya teaching on God" rather than being genuinely sound and valid from a Christian view-point.

The Ahmadiyya conception of God's justice, his love and grace as well as their critical sense *vis-à-vis* the sources of their theology emerge as being defective and weak. Finally, grave and at the same time saddening misunderstandings of the Christian doctrine obstruct a true dialogue concerning the Trinity, Christ's person, his incarnation and death and the nature and function of he Holy Spirit.

The "Christian initiative", in face of these facts, in Otten's view, should be marked not by hopelessness but rather by humility, for, as he rightly stresses, "Christians themselves are responsible for some of the misunderstandings of Muslims" (p. 104). Starting point of the positive communication of the Gospel should be "the presentation of Jesus as the manifestation of God" (p 106). This is indeed "a much more fruitful theme than arguing about the authenticity of the Scriptures, the variant readings of the Quran and the Bible, and real or supposed contradictions and historical inaccuracies in either book" (ibid.). In any dealing with the Muslim brethren it must be the Christian's endeavour to show how the true majesty of God is demonstrated most powerfully in the Cross. Whereas the Ahmadis "look upon the Cross as a pathetic picture of God's weakness", it is actually "the demonstration of the strength of his love, a love which seeks to save" (p. 108). In the perspective of 1 Cor 1:23-24, "the non-involvement of God, as depicted by Muslims, is a much greater threat to the majesty of God than the intense identification with man, pictured through the history of the crucifixion" (p. 109).

The author himself states an important limitation of his study in that it is based solely on sources in English and Malayalam, excluding the rich material in Urdu. On the other hand, he brings to his familiarity with the essential development of Muslim theological reflection something which even some of the outstanding scholars of

Islam and Christian-Muslim relations lack: a refined judgement in questions relating to the mainstream of the Christian theological tradition.

As to his express desire for further research in the Ahmadiyya, we would think that deep-going intellectual-religious biographies of Ghulam Ahmad and his main followers have still to be written, studies that would take into account the constantly changing intellectual and theological (as also socio-political) milieu as it challenged these leaders. In such studies, the possible impact on the Ahmadiyya should be discerned from such Indian Muslim modernists as Sayyid Ahmad Khan (1817-97), Chiragh Ali (1844-95) and Amir Ali (1849-1928) and the ongoing contemporary theological debates around their religious ideas. In this context it may be asked whether Otten's implicit assumption of a high degree of uniformity in serious Ahmadiyya theological thinking is in fact as self-evident as he seems to assume.

For a revised edition of the study the following minor points might be worth considering On pp. 16f. the designation — in classical Islam -- of the divine attributes into the categories of 'terrible' and 'glorious' would seem to be infelicitous. The remark seems to allude to the grouping of the divine attributes into those relating to God's awe-inspiring exaltedness and transcendence (*jalāl*) and those relating to his attractive beauty (*jamāl*). Hence a different pair of adjectives may be indicated. The attributes *subbūh* and *samad* (cf. p. 23) might be better rendered as 'Most Glorious' and 'Eternal, Absolute'.

Even if one did subcribe to the author's statement, "Every sin is a capital offence", one could still hold simultaneously to the traditional distinction between 'mortal' and 'venial' sins and hold this distinction to be duly reflected in the relevant degrees of punishment. Such a belief would not "hinder the believer from facing reality, the need for a Saviour from sin" (p. 9).

One misses an index of names and of major subjects dealt with, as well as a list of references made in the study to texts from the Quran and to Traditions.

We recommend Rev. Otten's helpful study warmly not only to those concerned with the Ahmadiyya Movement but to anyone engaged in promoting the *theological* encounter between Christians and Muslims today.

Christian W. Troll, S.J.

Silver Jubilee at Kurisumala Ashram

Easter 1983 has been for the monastic community of Kurisumala the twenty-fifth anniversary of their arrival on the Mountain of the Cross. For more than a century now Easter has attracted on these bare, rocky heights of the Sahya Mountains ardent pilgrims, true penitents, who make the ascent of the very rough and steep flank of the southern face of the mountain barefoot and with a load of stones

on their heads. These devotees of the Cross come from far and near, twice a year, on Friday before Holy Week and on New Sunday, to spend a night vigil of prayer on its summit. But in 1958 for the first time the Paschal Mystery was unfolded in the life and the celebration of a monastic community which had just settled there on the more grassy slopes of the mountain in a hut made of bamboo and plaited palm leaves. The pioneers were a batch of four, two monks, Francis Mahieu, Cistercian, and Bede Griffiths, Benedictine, who had recently come to India from the West, and two sons of the soil who had left their seminary to join this spiritual venture.

Origins, Growth and Expansion

Conceived at Shantivanam in 1955, the pioneering experiment of Fathers Monchanin and Le Saux to introduce Christian monasticism in this otherwise very monastic part of the world, the ashram was raised from its humble beginnings to the state of an Independent Oriental Monastery, under the Metropolitan of Tiruvalla, the second see of the Syro-Malankara Catholic Church in India. Its first chart had been made known from Shantivanam, in a book published in 1950 under the title, *An Indian Benedictine Ashram*. But this was to be a Syrian Shantivanam, as Father Monchanin liked to describe it, a monastic community, drawing its pattern of life and prayer from the most Oriental tradition of Christianity, that of the Churches of Asia. The Oriental monastic tradition had been chosen because it was felt to be closer to the indigenous forms of monasticism and would therefore lend itself more naturally to the assimilation of the ascetical and contemplative heritage of India.

In spite of the almost inaccessible wilderness and the mountainous solitude where they had pitched their hut, the initial batch of four grew rapidly. Within three years they had become a community of fifteen: sadhakas, brahmacharis and sannyasis — three degrees of membership corresponding to the three degrees of the Oriental monastic tradition: 1. monks of the 'rason', 2. monks of the small habit, 3. monks of the great habit. They do not want their number at Kurisumala to grow beyond twenty. Nor do they wish organize themselves into a monastic order with a central authority. They believe that at the present time of history the leaven which will make the kingdom of God more present in the Churches and in the world is more likely to be found in small communities leading a life of simplicity and utter sharing in faith and love, growing up out of the soil, yet ecclesial communities related to the local bishop, but with an ecological concern, and determined to remain self-reliant, living on local resources and by their own work, their bread-labour.

At the end of this twenty-fifth year the community of Kurisumala counts 21 members: 8 sadhakas, 4 brahmacharis and 9 sannyasis. The offshoots together count some 18 sadhakas, brahmacharis and sannyasis. From among our own members and from among the seekers who had only a temporary association with us, several serve in India with Mother Teresa's Missionaries of Charity, some serve independently in homes for the aged and in colonies for the care and rehabilitation

of leper patients. From among those who came to us from the affluent world, some remain with us. Several others have become monks in their own countries. Germany, France, England, U.S.A.

One is presently on Mount Athos, another one is settled at Tagore's Shantiniketan in West Bengal, and another still wrote this Christmas from Germany:

> I had been tempted to think that you had forgotten me But when I received your letter with the enclosed article of the *New Leader* on your Silver Jubilee, I read it with great joy I always draw new strength from remembering the time when I came to the faith in Christ It never fails to fill my heart with thankfulness for the Lord's mercy My first love with Jesus was beautiful. It was at Kurisumala I will never forget it. The Lord drew me out of deep waters, the abyss of drugs and of sin in which I was about to be swallowed up He radically changed me and strengthened me with innumerable graces But I am still longing for much more I am now completing my second year in Franziskushof — a Franciscan Friary in Bavaria By no means has it always been an easy time It did happen that I thought of leaving the Congregation. Yet Christ kept me here As I remain faithful to Christ, I come to know that I truly belong to him, in spite of all my weaknesses That fills my heart with peace and joy I can no more imagine a life without Jesus, our Redeemer. May the Infinite and Eternal Love reward your love, for you have accepted me among yourselves as your brother, to share your life Here also in Franziskushof we lead a simple life of prayer and work It is a brotherhood open to everyone and all Truly the Lord has brought me to the place most suited to me. To your whole fraternity I wish a Blessed Christmas and a Happy New Year.
>
> With Brotherly love. H.S

During the last fifteen years a number of ashrams have sprung up, offshoots of Kurisumala, under the leadership and responsibility of outgoing brahmacharis and sannyasis, in our Oriental eparchies as well as in Latin territories:

Saccidananda Ashram, Shantivanam, from where Francis Acharya came here in 1956, taken over in 1968 at the request of Fr Le Saux, Tamil Nadu.
Thirumala Ashram, near Cape Comorin, founded in 1970, Tamil Nadu.
Chayalpadi Ashram, in the Arch-Eparchy of Trivandrum, Kerala, founded in 1972.
Khrist Panthi Ashram, Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh, in 1975.
Bethany Colony, Bapatla, Andhra Pradesh, in 1979.
Dhyana Ashram, Eparchy of Bathery, in Kerala, in 1980.
Satya Deepa Ashram, Narasapura, Karnataka, in 1983.

The Jubilee at Kurisumala had been conceived of as a simple celebration of life. And it was the Lord himself who initiated it in the first weeks of the year, when on the eve of the feast of his Ascension he called to himself Fr Varkey Nadayatt, sannyasi-priest, to be the firstborn of our community to life eternal. It was for him an unexpected and quick crossing over to the other shore when after celebrating the Night Vigil with us he went to his cell for a rest and as he lay down he entered eternal rest. It was truly a Passover for him,

and for us also who felt so much one with him. We were thus led to open a new extension of the ashram, a place of rest for those who have entered life eternal. We chose the uppermost hillock of our land, crowned with a massive rock facing the rising sun. It soon came to be called the Resurrection Garden. We gather there regularly, on Sundays and feasts after Qurbana, to renew our communion with him who celebrated the true Passover. It continues to attract our community and gives us a Resurrection experience.

In Lent we had the clothing of the youngest member of the community who is only 17, while the eldest sannyasi is 81. On the Saturday of Lazarus, before Holy Week, was the liturgical celebration, when our Metropolitan Isaac Mar Youhanon presided over the concelebrated Qurbana. After Easter we had our community-renewal retreat guided by Bishop Jacob Acharuparambil of Trivandrum who had preached our first community retreat twenty-five years ago when he was a simple Capuchin friar of our neighbourhood. Another week of prayer followed, led by Fr Joseph Manikat, Professor at Saint Thomas Apostolic Seminary, Kottayam. The concluding celebration and perhaps also the climax, came on September 15, Exaltation of the Cross and 25th anniversary of the blessing of the Church and house by our founding-father, the late Zacharias Mar Athanasios. There were more dikshas: sadhaka, brahmachari and sannyasis and a large attendance of relatives and friends.

As we look back over these twenty-five years we wish to share our joy with our friends from far and near. Our hearts are overflowing with gratitude to God who has led us all along these eventful years to a greater light. He has made us grow into a deeper freedom. As the Upanishad puts it: "He who sees the Atman everywhere, finds his pleasure in the Atman. He plays with the Atman. He rests with the Atman. He has his joy in the Atman and thus becomes free, sovereignly free." But this does not happen without passing through the crucible of purification.

He has made us to share with our people. Our involvement with them, especially during the last years, has really come to fruition. An initial farmer's project, rather ambitious, met with many stumbling blocks before it could be called a sharing. This taught us to think in more humble terms, beginning with simple incentives to farming as per the distribution of one or two cows. Some of these farmers, most of whom came to our region as landless settlers in search of their livelihood on barren wastelands — there are more than thirty now — have now grown on their own strength. Some of them produce up to 50 litres of milk daily and the total production of milk per day amounts to half of the load taken down daily to the plains. They have become real co-workers and partners. Another way of sharing was a housing scheme. In the past years we had been able to build 28 houses. This year we undertook to build 25 new ones of which 17 have been completed to this day. We trust that God will give us the strength to pursue this work in the coming year.

Another very rewarding sharing, of a quite different order, is that of our prayer. From the beginning we found this Oriental prayer a

wonderful source of inspiration, something completely original and of an astonishing beauty. Up to recently it could be shared only with our guests. But with the publication of the first two volumes of *Prayer with the Harp of the Spirit* it has now reached out to other Churches, and literally to the four quarters of the world, as the wish is often expressed in our celebration. This has been hailed as the discovery of an Asian Liturgical Tradition, the spiritual heritage of the Syrian Churches, the ancient Churches of Asia, for long now under severe trial in West Asia but still very much alive in India.

In our preface to the first volume we have recorded how the message of the Holy Father Pope John Paul II to the Malankara Church, on the occasion of its Golden Jubilee celebration, at Christmas 1980, came to us as an encouragement to the work of inculturation we have undertaken from the beginning, an encouragement which calls for his blessings We offered our work as an earnest response to his appeal to foster dialogue between Indian culture and Christian faith. He had written: "Work with fervour to bring Christian unity to completion.... Encourage dialogue between Indian culture and Christian faith.... As understood by Archbishop Ivanios, Bharat contributes abundantly to the faith by its culture,... Work to make the Christian faith to reach everywhere and to assimilate the values of Indian culture."

Can we conclude with a word of Jesus to his closest disciples ?

> I have said these things to you,
> that my joy may be in you
> and that your joy may be full.

Indeed as the Upanishad says:

> God is joy
> From joy all beings have come.
> By joy they all live
> and unto joy they all return.

Francis Acharya

Book Reviews

Political Gospel

Political Issues in Luke-Acts. Edited by Richard J. Cassidy and Philip J. Scharper *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1983. Pp. x-180. $ 16.95 cloth, $ 9.95 paper

The book offers a collection of interesting essays dealing with one or more of the social and political themes in the Lukan writings. In spite of their interest only a brief summary can be given here.

R. F O'Toole, S.J., explains "Luke's Position on Politics and Society in Luke-Acts" Three points are basic in Luke. belief in Christ and baptism in his name, God is the God of history, the imitation of Christ by Christians, which centres on Jesus as Saviour of the weak, oppressed, despised, and sinners, in humility and service toward the Gentiles, the rich and poor, women, and the sick. A concluding note warns against pitfalls· our own problems should not be read back into Luke's time, yet Luke's opinions should not be stripped of their true force.

W. M. Swartley in "Politics or Peace (*Eirēnē*) in Luke's Gospel", summarizes and evaluates three conflicting misterpretations. Luke's political apologetic (Conzelmann), and Jesus' ministry socially, economically and politically revolutionary (Cassidy and Yoder but with a difference, Cassidy portrays Jesus as a Gandhi-like figure advocating non-violent resistance). An examination of Luke's use and meaning of *eirēnē* suggests that some qualification is needed for each of these approaches.

J D. M. Derrett, contributes a study on "Luke's Perspective on Tribute to Caesar" "The things that are Caesar's" virtually means 'Caesar's rights'. There are duties towards man, as well as duties towards God; "God has (quasi-)legislated in respect of both" (p 42). Duties towards man imply paying taxes, duties towards God imply love of the neighbour, even of the enemy. Jesus' answer regarding taxes means: render to Caesar what is his right, subject to the overriding rights of God. We must note that Jesus' answer refers to taxes, not to obedience; this is not absolute but conditional.

F. W. Danker's "Reciprocity in the Ancient World and in Acts 15:13-29" focusses on the Hellenistic feature of the reciprocity system in vogue in the Graeco-Roman world. The Greek established pattern of ultimate decision by the popular assembly (*demos*) retained its hold on the Graceo-Roman world. "In practice the council or *boulē* made proposals but the *demos* voted on them and made additions or amendments The collegiate action of the two bodies is therefore ordinarily expressed in the phrase 'It was resolved by the council and the people'." (p 54). Compare Acts 15, 22 and 28 where "the Holy Spirit assumes the place of the traditional *boulē* and the pronoun *hēmin* includes all the participants in the formulation of the decree" (p. 55).

"The Women at Luke's Supper" by Q. Quesnell takes up the surprise of J. Jeremias (1955) at the absence of the women at the Last Supper, and his question (1966) whether the explicit statement of Mt, Mk and Lk reflects the full historical fact Quesnell tries to "lay out all the evidence in the Gospel and in Acts pointing to the fact (1) that Luke thought a larger group than just the Twelve were at the Supper with Jesus; and (2) that within that larger group Luke included the women" (p. 59).

J M. Ford in "Reconciliation and Forgiveness in Luke's Gospel" analyses: 1 the Lukan passages opening and closing Jesus' ministry, stressing the reconciling and forgiving character of Jesus, 2. the way in which Luke presents Jesus' dealings with tax collectors and Samaritans, and their conversion in Acts; 3 the way to the cross and the crucifixion.

In "Martyrdom in Luke-Acts and the Lukan Social Ethic" C. H. Talbert considers Jesus' death as a martyrdom. Luke's theology of martyrdom has two facets: martyrdom as rejection, v.g., the case of the OT prophets; and as legitimation of Jesus and the Christian cause, serving also as catalyst for evangelistic outreach, though not always. The social implications of Luke's view are: 1. the Lukan Jesus manifesets indifference to

the political rulers (the Romans); he believes that all power and authority reside in God, 2 toward the Jewish structure he was involved in non-violent resistance A concluding warning. "The Lukan Jesus' primary vehicle for social change — if such language is even legitimate in describing Lukan thought — was the structure of life in the community of his disciples . ." (p 108) Talbert favours the views of Yoder and Hauerwas who, each in his own way, see the relevance of the Lukan perspective for modern life in the influence the Church will have upon society by embodying in its life a transcendent reality, being nothing less than the community of love, this will be the leaven that turns the world upside down (cp Acts 17, 6) "Yoder's thesis is that the first duty of the Church for society is to be the Church" (p 108) The Lukan Jesus, Hauerwas argues, "did not go to the top (to Caesar or to Pilate) to get something done Nor did he go to the Left (Zealots). He went instead to the poor and the sinners He established a community to embody God's grace" (p 109)

In "Luke's 'Innocent' Jesus A Scriptural Apologetic", D Schmidt criticizes Cassidy's stand on a Lukan apologetic In Luke's Passion narrative three charges are brought against Jesus by the chief priests and scribes, followed by Pilate's triple profession of innocence Critics have sought in these declarations of innocence the basis for discerning Luke's apologetic. Schmidt emphasizes that the charges were not 'false', they are Luke's summary of how the chief priests and scribes understood Jesus Jesus' teaching had captivated the people and diverted them from their leaders who felt themselves threatened Luke's interest in the declaration of Jesus' innocence is not political but Scriptural apologetic as is evident from the Emmaus episode and Peter's addresses in Acts Jesus suffers in accordance with Scripture

"According to Luke, Who Put Jesus to Death?", by E. J Via, is, as the previous essay, a critique of Cassidy Her main objection is that Cassidy does not properly distinguish the historical Jesus and Luke's Jesus. Luke's portrayal of Jesus' social, political and religious stance stands side by side with Luke's effort to portray Jesus and his Church as worthy of legal status in Rome. To give credibility to this position, Luke lays the responsibility for Jesus' death primarily on the Jewish rulers. The Gentile rulers who put Jesus to death did so not because they found him guilty of any crime, but to gain the favour of the Jews, especially their leaders. In this way, Luke removes theoretical obstacles to the legalization of Christianity as a religion in the Roman Empire, and undermines the rational for Roman persecution of Christians

"Luke's Audience, the Chief Priests and the Motive for Jesus' Dath", by R. J. Cassidy, is both a clarification of his stand and an answer to his critics. Luke's prospective audience may have been complex. Gentile Christians, Jewish Christians, prospective Jewish converts, even educated pagan readers who had an interest in the new Christian way. Luke does not exonerate the Roman governor and the Roman soldiers from their own respective involvement in the death of Jesus. Yet, he clearly indicates that the chief priests and their allies are the ones principally responsible for bringing about Jesus' death pressuring Pilate into destroying him Their motive was the threat that Jesus posed to them. Luke also portrays a group in Jerusalem that was favourably disposed toward Jesus and not sympathetic to the chief priests' efforts to destroy him. Cassidy disagrees with commentators who because of four affirmations of Jesus' innocence in Luke's Gospel, conclude that Luke wished to make a 'political apologetic' to Roman officials and others concerning the new Christian movement.

J VOLCKAERT, S J.

Bible on War and Peace

War, Peace and the Bible. By J. Carter SWAIM *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp xvi-125 $ 6.95.

The Preface begins by describing two approaches to the Bible. Translating the Bible for his people, Ulfilas, bishop of the Goths (4th cent.), omitted some warlike portions of the OT because his people were already too fierce and indisciplined Seven centuries later Aelric, a Benedictine monk, produced an Ango-Saxon translation of parts of the Bible; he included some warlike portions with a view of kindling patriotic fervour among his people to arouse them to resist the invading Danes. Both attitudes are based upon the conviction that the Bible does or at least can entice and embolden to wage war. The author's basic question is: "Does the Bible teach war or peace?" (p. xv). When reading Israel's history we must admit that in the OT God seems to lead his people to war and

that he orders them to exterminate their enemies drastically, both during the conquest of the Promised Land and even after the settlement of Canaan. These wars appear as God's wars, holy wars. The fact that warfare in those days was nothing compared with modern warfare, no more than the fact that the extermination of peoples was far from being total (in spite of what the epic texts would seem to suggest) is no excuse, no justification. Both Ulfilas and Aelric seem to overlook one basic principle which the author stresses from the beginning, viz., the fact that God's revelation was progressive. We might add that the early Fathers already exalted God's 'condescension', his coming down to the level of man in the process of man's gradual education. This principle is basic for judging the history of the OT The conclusion of the Preface marks this progressive aspect very well "If Deborah can sing, 'the Lord is a man of war', the early Church could proclaim of Jesus, 'He is our peace'" (p xv) The contrast could even have been heightened by saying: if Moses (rather than Deborah) can sing "the Lord is a man of war" (Exod 15, 3), Paul proclaimed that God is a "God of peace" (Rom 15, 33, 16, 22, Phil 4, 9, 1 Thess 5, 23, cf Heb 13, 20), and of Christ Jesus who unites Jews and Gentiles in himself he proclaims "He is our peace" (Eph 2, 14) In the Christmas liturgy the Church greets Jesus as "Prince of Peace" (cf Is 9, 5)

The book consists of eight brief chapters. Chs 1-2 give a survey of war and peace in the OT. 1 reflections on the conquest and settlement of Canaan, followed by the changing attitude to war more particularly during the prophetic age, 2. not only military exploits and heroes were mentioned in the OT, more emphasis is put upon Israel as God's chosen people, the deliverance from bondage, the meaning of the goodness of God Chs 3-4 deal with the message of Jesus, prophet of the Nations, his ministry, his meeting with Pilate and the kingdom of truth; also the Pax Romana and world situation at the birth of Christ, the biblical concept of salvation, Christian peace in a militaristic world. Chs 5-8 deal directly with present day problems of war and peace which elicit some biblical reflections. The book gives no biblical or theological treatise on war and peace. The author, retired professor of NT literature at Western (now Pittsburgh) Theological Seminary, devotes his time to an apostolate of peace. The style of the book is not the style of the biblical scholar, rather that of the ordained minister of the United Presbyterian Church, U S A. Written for the general reader in a simple language and clear expositions of biblical texts, often illustrated by their cultural and religious context, but not seldom broadly adapted to the topics treated, the book aims at helping Christian readers find their stand in the present day problems concerning war, armaments and violence

J VOLCKAERT, S.J

Meaning of Christianity

An Approach to Christianity. By Bishop Christopher BUTLER *London, Collins* (Fount Paperbacks), 1981. Pp 300 £ 2 95

"I have tried in this book to speak to intelligent people who may feel an obscure need for fundamental meaning but who recoil from the refinements of professional theology.. I have tried to be orthodox as well as simple" (p 7) Thus writes Bishop Butler in his Foreword to *An Approach to Christianity*. Understandibly, the "intelligent people" in search for meaning whom the author has primarily in mind are people born and bred in the affluent West, traditionally Christian, the Third World problems are not directly touched upon, though some pages are devoted to the meeting of Christianity with the religious traditions of the world As for Bishop Butler's theological "simplicity", it will of course be correctly understood by anyone familiar with his long literary career the Bishop acknowledges here his indebtedness to Lonergan and K. Rahner, but his own personal charism consists in translating deep theological insights into ordinary language

The structure of the work is classic and simple It starts with "the question", where man is shown to be a seeker for ultimate measing who must assume the responsibility for his own decision The credentials of the Bible, in particular of the New Testament, are then exposed in the light of modern biblical scholarship The "point of ultimate reference" is God, the absolute Mystery, who spoke through the prophets but in the last days manifested himself in Jesus whom he raised from the dead. Through the centuries, starting from the apostolic generation, the Church has reflected on the mystery of Jesus Christ; she con-

tinues to do so today and his person remains her message. Through membership of the Church "our contact is not with the memory of a dead-and-done-with martyr, but with one who has 'risen from the dead' and is alive for ever more" (p. 236). Salvation through Christ, however, is universal, the Church's function consisting in being "the representative, the sign, the real communicator of the redemption" achieved by him (pp. 260-261) The institutional Church, then, is integral to Christian faith and doctrine. If it is made up of sinful men, this "is not in any sense an argument against Christianity, but it is a serious comment on human nature" (p. 274). In a last chapter, entitled "Will You Also Go Away?", the point is made once more that faith does not come at the end of a syllogism and that man "is fully *himself* in the responsible exercise of his freedom" (p 299)

This short summary does not do justice to the many insights and lively references with which the book is sparked. It indicates, however, the "approach" to Christianity which the author proposes to his readers To some this approach will seem to go back to outdated apologetics; others, touched by the author's testimony, will be helped to discover or rediscover their Christian roots

J DUPUIS, S J.

Inter-religious Dialogue

Faith Meets Faith. Mission Trends, No. 5. Edited by Gerald H ANDERSON and Thomas F. STRANSKY *New York/ Ramsey, Paulist Press,* 1981 Pp x-306. $ 3.95.

After *Third World Theologies* and *Liberation Theologies in North America and Europe* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1982, pp 202-203), the series "Mission Trends" devotes its fifth volume to the ongoing debate on the relation of Christian faith to religious pluralism and to the theory and practice of inter-religious dialogue. This volume, as the previous ones, presents itself as an anthology wherein significant papers by individual authors as well as official documents from various quarters, official and non-official, have been gathered together for easy access and reference. This procedure affords the reader familiarity with "Mission Trends" in the context of the present meeting between faiths. It may be added that the two indefatigable editors had already previously co-edited another anthology, not unrelated to the present one, under the title *Christ's Lordship and Religious Pluralism* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1983, pp. 356-357).

The range of the present collection extends widely to representative voices of the Protestant, Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions which reflect recent literature on the theme; authors hail from various continents and include Church leaders as well as missionaries and lay-persons. Official statements are from the Vatican and the World Council of Churches; unofficial ones from a Protestant theological seminary and a Roman Catholic study-group. "All essays", the editors tell us, "are intentionally *from* Christians *for* Christians, to encourage them in their contacts and meetings with people of other faiths to reflect and act responsibly — with courage, gentleness, and reverence" (p. x) Those other faiths include Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, African religions, Primal World-Views, as well as new spiritual movements Christian approaches to Marxism, Maoism and other secular ideologies are left out of consideration here, as, we are told, these will be dealt with in future volumes of the same series

Individual contributions cannot be reviewed here, nor is it possible to single out some without prejudice to others Let it suffice to point out the broad diversity which obtains between various Christian approaches to religious pluralism and inter-religious dialogue. The diversity ranges from evangelical outreach to mutual fertilization, from a stress on differences or on common ground. At issue is how to combine the universal economy of the Spirit with the uniqueness of Jesus Christ.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

Teilhardiana

Convergence. A Study on Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Other Eminent Thinkers. Edited by Paul MAROKY. *Kottayam, Oriental Institute of Religious Studies,* 1981. Pp. xxvi-281 Rs 28 (paper-back); Rs 40 (hard bound)

This book is a worthy tribute from India to Teilhard de Chardin on the centenary year of his birth. The title, "Convergence", is borrowed from Teilhard's own rich terminology where the term played an important role, referring among other things to the way T. conceived the inter-relationship between

Continued on p. 177. See also p. 197 and 202.

Cum permissu superiorum

Vidyajyoti
JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION
Vol. XLVIII MAY 1984 No. 5

In Memoriam: Joseph Putz, S.J.

MANY of our readers will have heard, before reading this editorial dedicated to his memory, of the death of Fr Joseph Putz, S.J., who for 33 years has been the chief editor of THE CLERGY MONTHLY, the predecessor of our Journal. He died in Delhi on 23rd February, 1984, in his ninetieth year. The present obituary — which, due to unavoidable circumstances, could not be published in an earlier issue of VIDYAJYOTI — wishes to pay tribute to the outstanding contribution he made to the Church in India as a theologian and professor, as writer and editor.

Joseph Putz was born in Mersch-sur-Alzette (Luxemburg) on 30th April, 1894 and entered the Society of Jesus in Belgium in 1913. His early formation as a Jesuit soon took him to Canterbury and Stonyhurst, England (1914-19), where he completed his philosophical studies. Returning to Belgium, he taught mathematics, physics and chemistry for four years and did the first year of his theological training at Louvain (1923-24). Soon he was on the move again, continuing his theological studies in Innsbruck Austria (1924-26), where he was ordained a priest (1926), and in Naples (Italy 1926-27). After his last year of probation in Belgium (1927-28), he spent one year in Brussels as College Prefect and Director of Mission Works (1928-29). It is then that Fr Putz was asked by his Jesuit Provincial to leave for India to take up a chair of theology at St Mary's College, Kurseong, whose teaching staff at that time was in great need of reinforcement. He reached India in January 1930. When, in 1932, St Mary's College was raised to a Faculty of Theology, Fr Putz soon became Prefect of Studies and Dean of the Faculty (1933), a post which he uninterruptedly filled for the next 35 years, till 1968.

THE CLERGY MONTHLY was launched in Madras in 1938 by Archbishop L. Mathias, S.D.B. When in 1940 St Mary's College, Kurseong, was asked to take over the periodical, Fr Putz became its chief editor. He was to stay at the editorial desk for the next 33 years, till 1973, combining all the while the absorbing task of editing a monthly review with a heavy teaching schedule. These were years of intense

activity. Over the years Fr Putz taught Christology and the Eucharist — his two favourite subjects — the Trinity, and the Sacraments. Liturgy and Missiology were two other subjects to which he made a substantive contribution which influenced the pre-Conciliar and Conciliar renewal. His concise but well thought out class notes were much sought after in other institutions as well. Besides commenting on Church documents and events and signing countless reports and book-reviews, Fr Putz, year after year, wrote in THE CLERGY MONTHLY important theological articles in which breadth of vision and inspiration combine with a perfect control of the language. These confirmed his international fame as a theologian, already established in 1938 by the publication of *My Mass*, a book which was destined to become a classic and went through many editions in several languages.

As chief editor of THE CLERGY MONTHLY Fr Putz had the good fortune of having around him a team of devoted collaborators, who have all been a credit to the review. Their names remain in the memory of those among our readers who have perused our periodical for many years. The chief among them were: Frs J. Sanders (moral theology and canon law), P. De Letter (dogmatic theology) and J. Bayart (Indology). As all three have gone to their reward before him, it seems fitting to associate their names with his as we pay tribute to his stewardship of the periodical.

Fr Putz travelled little; his duty was at his desk. A man of few words, he did not attend many congresses. But he did allow himself to be prevailed upon when the occasion so demanded. In 1950 he served as an expert at the epoch-making First Plenary Council of the Indian Bishops in Bangalore. In 1956 he took active part in the First International Congress of Pastoral Liturgy in Assisi and the Missionary Congress that preceded it. In 1962 he accompanied Bishop L. R. Morrow, S.D.B., of Krishnagar to the first session of the Second Vatican Council and was soon nominated expert to the Indian Bishops — a quality in which he attended all the Council sessions (1962-65). His contribution to the Council was primarily in the field of liturgy and mission. He had particularly at heart the restoration of a living and participatory liturgy as well as the renewal of mission based on the theology of the local Church and the principles of adaptation and inculturation. The contribution he made at the Council in those areas may be seen as the climax of his theological career.

Fr Putz was almost 80 when in 1973 he retired from teaching and handed over the editorship of THE CLERGY MONTHLY to younger hands. St Mary's College, Kurseong, where he had spent 41 years of his life, had been transferred to Delhi one and a half year earlier.

These were changes which might have subdued the spirit of men younger than he was. Fr Putz adapted himself to the new situation with remarkable zest. His retirement was gracious and fruitful. All through the last ten years of a long life he kept up the vast interests, the keen reading habit, sharpness of mind and lucidity of judgment which had made him the great master that he was. To former colleagues he remained a man of good counsel and sound theological advice, also endearing himself to the young generations of students that now passed through Vidyajyoti Institute. His unobstrusive presence, the example he gave of long years of faithful service and commitment to the Lord were to the end a source of inspiration which we now miss.

Fr Putz's life has been full and well spent. His 70 years as a Jesuit and 58 as a priest, his long career as a theologian, professor and writer were all centred on the person of Jesus Christ, his Master, to follow and serve whom had been his one great ambition. Christ-centredness remains the most characteristic trait of his spiritual life. His deep familiarity with the Lord overflowed in his teaching and writing. When on 23rd February last his pilgrimage was over, the Lord's decisive call to him must have been: "Well done, good and faithful servant,... enter into the joy of your Master."

R.I.P.

Theological Reflection in Ministry

Joe CURRIE, S.J.

In a complex and changing world, we are challenged to discern the continuing presence and action of God and to respond, faithfully and effectively, to this presence. For the adult Christian, and especially for the minister, *this necessitates a method of reflection.*[1]

A. The Problem

FOR the past half-dozen years, during which I have been involved in the pastoral education of Jesuit theological students in Delhi and Pune, I have been searching for a method of theological reflection *in ministry*.[2] Central to any pastoral education programme is *supervised ministry*, by means of which the trainee, under sensitive guidance, is not only extended by suitable pastoral objectives, but is also encouraged ro develop the *skills* and *attitudes* he will need to become an effective minister of the Word in any community and in any situation. One of the most important skills to be learned in this period of his training is that of *theological reflection* whereby he develops the habit of encountering people and issues, and responding to them, precisely in his role and function *as a Christian minister*, rather than as a mere administrator, professional helper or crisis manager. Usually, however, both trainees and their guides tend to shy away from this discipline of stepping back and taking a second look, from a faith perspective, at what they are doing and how and why they are doing it. Their reasons for *not* reflecting theologically on their ministry are numerous: (a) a lack of *time*: "We have enough to do without *this*"; (b) a lack of *confidence*: "This is something for

---

1. James D. WHITEHEAD and Evelyn Eaton WHITEHEAD, *Method in Ministry: Theological Reflection and Christian Ministry*, New York: Seabury Press, 1980, p. 9.

2. Theology reflection in ministry is necessarily more limited by time and more focused on a given concern or happening than that done by professional theologians. The methods suggested in this article stand midway between the brief periods of reflection leading to quick and immediate solutions that is the common practice in ministry, and the ongoing and ever-deepening search for *insight and understanding*, whether or not it leads to concrete action, that characterises the work of the professional theologian. See the continuum of theological reflection in *Method in Ministry*, p. 3.

the *experts*, not us"; and (c) a lack of *conviction* about its value: "Is this *really* going to help us solve our concrete day-to-day problems ?" But, more often than not, the real resistance to reflecting on ministry comes from a *fourth* complaint, the lack of a workable *methodology*, suited to men in the field: "Just *how* are we to go about it ?"

In looking for an effective answer to this question, one that might appeal to busy practitioners, I first arrived at what for me was a very significant learning. This involved the "demythologising" of "theological" reflection. Once the aura and mystique were removed; once the trainees, fresh from their theological studies and now immersed in pastoral ministry, were encouraged to see the connection between the two; once it became clear that such reflection was part of a process that is "always the person's most distinctive mode of being, and his only effective way of changing the world"[3], then they took courage to attempt it. But this took quite a while. Often, it was not until the end of their supervised ministry that they were able to answer, with some degree of confidence, the question: "What should be the response of the Christian minister to this particular situation ?"

It has often puzzled me how "the man of a single book" can adopt its *secular* viewpoint and confidently pass judgment on all that is happening around him; or how another, armed with a B.Sc. diploma, acquires a *scientific* outlook to last him a lifetime; or how a professional can turn his particular skill and the attitudes it engenders into "a way of life"— and yet we Christian ministers, steeped in faith traditions from our childhood and given the chance to refine and deepen these traditions during three or four years of serious study, nevertheless find it difficult to acquire a *theological* perspective. Why need it require such an effort on our part ? Is it because, as a French philosopher once noted, some truths remain only our "property", outside of us, and fail to elicit spontaneous and instinctive responses ?

True knowledge, said the ancient Greeks, emerges from a combination of *theory* and *praxis*, the latter involving the interplay of action and reflection. Theory alone would seem to be sterile, merely "notional". Praxis alone would be devoid of the wisdom of our forbears, and would probably condemn us to repeating the mistakes of the past. Translated in terms of our formation as ministers of the Word, this would suggest that our training would require a mutually enriching, mutually challenging combination of *theology* and *ministry*, the latter not to be viewed merely as pastoral action, but rather as a *praxis* of ministerial experience and theological reflection.

3. Pedro Arrupe, *SJ Documentation*, 33 (May 6, 1976).

Theological reflection, then, need not be the sole preserve and pastime of professional theologians, the "experts". It is an essential part of our own ongoing theological formation and ministry. A lack of pastoral experience during our formal theological training might, in fact, have hindered our efforts toward developing the skill of theological reflection. Such training might well have taken us no further *than only a notional or theoretical knowledge, merely "property"*, even if acquired at considerable cost! But to neglect recording in some way and reflecting upon our experience in ministry, once we are involved in a seemingly unending round of daily routine, punctuated by unexpected crises, would also be a loss. We add little theological depth or faith dimension to our pastoral activity and problem-solving. Rare are the opportunities when we actually pause to view things in (faith) perspective and try to evaluate our specific role as ministers of the Word in a world that needs to hear, for a change, *good* news. We show little appreciation for the rich Christian tradition, including its theological interpretations, which originally inspired us and subsequently formed us in this particular vocation.

Theological reflection might be described as essentially a process that leads to an emerging correlation or congruence between one's faith traditions — scriptural, historical, systematic and moral — and one's present experience in life and ministry. What happens in theological reflection is the encouragement of these two poles of *experience* and *faith traditions* to confront, enlighten and interpret each other in such a way that *both* are enriched: present experience can be studied and questioned in the light of our faith and theology; and these traditions can in turn be enlightened and interpreted against the backdrop of this given time, this particular culture and this set of circumstances. Obviously, such reflection can be carried out at different levels, and can be done individually as well as in groups. Though they may not call it theological reflection, a Christian housewife or businessman may, after a good bit of soul-searching, come to a very difficult decision precisely because of her or his present understanding of Gospel values. We need not be accomplished exegetes to interpret and act responsibly in our world, according to our reading of the attitudes and dispositions of Jesus in the Gospel. Christians who take their vocation seriously are doing this all the time. There is no reason why we ministers cannot and should not do as much.

But we still need a *method*, a discipline to guide our efforts. Such a method was first offered to me by a fellow-Jesuit, who was himself involved at the time in pastoral education and social ministry. It is his formulation of the process of theological reflection that I have

referred to in the preceding paragraph. He proposes two possible ways, both flowing from the above description, for theologising on ministry. An application of these complementary approaches can be found in an article he wrote at the time, entitled "An Apostolic Spirituality for the Ministry of Social Justice".[4] Several years later, I enlisted the help of some of the staff of Vidyajyoti Institute, Delhi, who were actively interested in pastoral education. Their suggestions and insights, each from a different point of view, were greatly appreciated by the young trainees and were effectively implemented. More recently, I have come across a book[5] which offers both a *model* and a *method* which, in effect, unite and clarify all the above methodologies.

In this article, I shall attempt first to summarise these various approaches, and then supplement them with some guideline questions which might help to initiate the process. Finally, by way of an appendix, I shall offer some areas of ministry today which lend themselves to further theological reflection. These have emerged from the experience of pastoral trainees over the past few years.

B. Towards a Solution

Theological reflection in ministry has to be *more than just a discussion* about pastoral concerns; it is different, too, from the usual, desperate search for a solution that will work *now*. Such reflection seeks to be *disciplined*, thereby avoiding the free-wheeling and tangential tendencies often associated with open-ended discussion. At the same time, it strives to be *deepening*, avoiding the temptation to be satisfied with short-term and shallow solutions to important problems. Theological reflection seeks to ask critical questions of both present experience and faith traditions, as a prelude to new insights and understandings, which in turn lead to commitment to and actual involvement in change efforts in faith and ministry.

Every effort of theologising in ministry aims at interpreting God's action in the world, in history, in this particular event, so that we might more effectively collaborate with that action. Initially, we might identify *five* ways of going about this effort. They are obviously *not* mutually exclusive; rather they represent different accents, different starting points. They have the same goal and even their way of proceeding, as will be seen, is similar. Perhaps most important, these

---

4. MAX OLIVA, "An Apostolic Spirituality for the Ministry of Social Justice", *Review for Religious*, 36 (1977), pp. 687-694.
5. J. D. WHITEHEAD and E. E. WHITEHEAD, *Method in Ministry*.

approaches are within the competence of any — even the most overworked — minister in the field.

1. *Theology Confronting Experience*

One way to start theologising is by testing the validity of our traditional beliefs and concepts against the often stark reality we find ourselves faced with in ministry. How does our theology of sin and grace, for example, or our experience of suffering as purifying and life-giving, stand up against the blindness and brutalisation we encounter in daily human life? Where are the signs of the kingdom, the presence of the crucified Christ in his risen life, in our midst? Segundo[6] follows this approach when he calls for a reformulation of the Pauline summary of the "good news". Instead of "God raised his Son, Jesus Christ, from the dead", he suggests that "No love is lost on this earth" — no suffering for the sake of others is ever in vain — would better respond to the anxieties of those engaged in the struggles of our times.

Or again, how does our understanding of the priesthood of Jesus Christ square with our own life-style and functioning today? A useful theological reflection might be made on the custom of kissing the hands of the newly ordained priest. Comparing this sign of reverence with the "mandate" of Jn 13, it might be truer to our traditions if the new priest first offers to wash the feet of the people he is to serve, before allowing them ro kiss his hands.

And just what are the assumptions and ideologies behind the decisions and options we make in our pastoral activities? Are they in fact drawn from a *faith* perspective, or do they spring from other considerations and compulsions?

2. *Experience Confronting Theology*

The second approach in fact complements the first. You will rarely engage in one without the other. The dialogue between experience and faith traditions is a two-way one. But here we begin with the minister's or group's personal experience, which some feel is where theological reflection in ministry should by rights always begin. One of my friends told me, in fact, that the first incentive he ever had to reflect theologically on his ministry was when he found himself — in a lonely mission station — confronted with a situation that made absolutely no sense to him. Another, assigned to a once flourishing parish, but where now apathy and resistance prevailed because of the non-availability of material goods which had been freely distributed

6. Juan Luis SEGUNDO, *The Hidden Motives of Pastoral Action*, New York: Orbis Books, 1978, chapter six: "A Different Approach".

by his predecessors, began to "search the scriptrures" for a clearer understanding of his situation, of the true meaning of evangelisation, and of the foolishness and "failure" of the cross.

I have also found that shared pastoral experience — a common concern about an issue of vital concern to the community — can be a great "leveller" of conflicting ideologies, and it has a way of bridging the generation gap in ministry. We cease to talk (often without listening !) from the "old" theology to the "new", and begin to concentrate our attention, our experience and our understanding on a *real* issue. We tend more readily to listen to one another, for we are all trying to "grasp" a situation in which each of us has a personal stake. Experience brings us together in a search for understanding and options for action.

Such an approach might begin spontaneously when we become aware of certain questions that inevitably arise in the midst of our pastoral functioning — questions like: To what extent (e.g. in my preaching, my dress, my life-style and behaviour) am I bound to meet the expectations of the people ? Do I find myself making distinctions, according to age, sex, education, economic bracket or social class, among the people under my care ? What is my attitude toward the laity ? toward non-Christians ? Am I able to show genuine compassion, in the confessional and with the weak and recalcitrant ? What makes me different from others in the service professions ? What is my criterion for success ? And how do I handle failure and rejection ? What does "availability" mean to me ? Do I have the right (or the *ability*) to say "no" ? Am I doing the work of God, or merely working for God, i.e. defining my own objectives without discerning options in the light of faith ? What kind of a leader am I ? And what is my stance toward injustice, in the family and the factory, at the kacheri or the church ?

These are questions which, I think, occur to all of us at one time or another. Any one of them (and others as well), when posed to a group involved in ministry, can initiate a useful period of theological reflection. But discipline (and perhaps some facilitation) might be needed to keep the interaction from becoming only a wide-ranging discussion. The constant referrant in seeking answers, and making changes when called for, should be our scriptural and faith traditions, as understood and interpreted by theology.

3. *The "Living" Word Actualising the "Written" Word*

Still another approach begins with clarifying our understanding of the human problematic. This would involve discarding hasty

generalisations and tempering "gut" reactions, while critically analysing just what is happening to individuals and communities. We may *well have to make use of the social sciences at this stage.*

Then, through analogies and patterns that we find in scripture, and especially from our understanding of Jesus in the Gospel, we try to discover how the word of God addresses itself to this particular situation. This need not be a fundamentalist quest — e.g., What would Jesus do if he were here? Rather, our efforts stem from a belief that God's word is "alive and active" even today, that he *still* speaks to us through his written word which, when received in faith, becomes a living word addressed to us Conditioned though they are by a particular cultural and social milieu at a given time in history, the scriptures, we believe, are capable of speaking to the *common* human problematic. To any situation of oppression, God's word speaks freedom, though not without struggle and suffering For all kinds of blindness, God's word promises light For those who seek a change of heart, whenever and wherever, God's word reveals tender compassion and offers strength to persevere. We are constantly using such analogies in our Sunday sermons. What is to prevent us from making a similar effort to understand what happens during the rest of the week ?

The third step places our human problematic against the word of God; it compares what *is* happening with what that word promises *should* and *will* happen, if we collaborate with God's action in history, as we daily give *our* word to do so: "Your kingdom come; your will be done, *on earth* as it is in heaven". A lack of convergence or congruence here, between the problematic and God's promises, calls for decisions and options on our part, and this is the fourth step of the process: actualising God's word through discernment and committed action.

4. *Searching for "Artha"*

A fourth approach to theological reflection centres around the Sanskrit word *artha* and its three connotations: "questioning", "meaning" and "purpose"; these in turn suggest a method. We first of all *question critically* both the principal partners in dialogue, faith traditions and this life-situation, as seen in the light of each other; and we question as well the ideologies, slogans and prejudices which may interfere with the primary dialogue. Then we search for the deeper *meaning* of this particular pastoral concern (as seen from a faith perspective), by means of looking for connections and unifying elements. We try to find patterns and analogies from the various

sources of our faith traditions to help explain the present happening, or we look for causes, or higher principles and broader experiences, which might synthesise the various elements and factors in the situation that now seem to us disparate and unconnected. The apparent divergence between what is happening and God's promises may also be understood as part of a dialectical process, much as Jesus described his Father's action in the world by means of the parable of the wheat and the weeds (Mt 13, 24f).

Artha as "purpose" identifies the result of the process of theological reflection. It is not enough just to understand a given situation; we must *purposefully* act to transform what can be changed and bring it into harmony with the values of the kingdom, as perceived by our faith vision In short, theological reflection takes place when we are able to confront our experience with out faith and obtain a fuller *artha*, to share with one another in community' and to transform ourselves and our world accordingly.

5 *A Search for Truth*

Gandhi has inspired one final approach to theological reflection. His search of God, recorded in his *Experiments with Truth*, followed a certain methodology, the essence of which was a *dynamic will to action*. Concrete actions, preceded by a vision and followed up by a reflective evaluation, were, according to Gandhi, the way to the Truth The presumption underlying this praxis-oriented quest is that God draws us back to himself through *events* — favourable or not — and we find him in *events*, through our responsible decisions *put into practice*. Vitally concerned about and committed to man in history, God would seem to expect us to be no less so. Our best response to his Word and Truth does not lie only in static understanding. Our "obedience of faith" implies an active readiness to collaborate with his action in history. A sensitive perceptiveness, a clear and deep vision, is however, needed for us to become aware of God's Word — his presence and action — in this particular set of circumstances. But that Word is essentially a call to discern options, to take a stand and to act responsibly. The accent in this view of theological reflection is clearly on involvement, commitment and action, without which such reflection makes little headway in its search for the Truth.

From all the above, it is possible for us to derive a four-step *schema* to guide our efforts toward theologising in ministry:

1. Acquire a thorough and critical understanding of the human problematic;

2. *Address* God's Word — contained in our faith vision and our grasp of its traditions — to this particular problematic;

3. *Identify* areas of convergence and divergence between the problematic and God's promises; and

4. Commit ourselves — through discernment and action — to bring the divergent elements in the problematic into conformity with God's promises.

To those who would object that such the *schema* seems artificial and, hence, does not seem to lend itself readily to implementation, I would reply that this is true in applying any skill until it is mastered. Think of the first attempts you made at learning to drive a vehicle or to play a musical instrument. How complicated and unnatural it seemed. And yet, if you have persevered, you are now probably unaware when you are switching down gears or moving up scales You have become fluent in the skill; you have a *feel* for it, and quite possibly you have even developed your own particular style. But only because you once mastered the fundamentals Theological reflection in or out of ministry, is like that It is not just a discussion; it is a disciplined effort. It is never easy, but it *is* easier when we have a method for doing it And like most skills, we can master it only by *doing* it. Finally, we shall persevere in doing it only if we see that it makes a difference in our ministry and in our lives of faith.

C. A Summary Model and Method

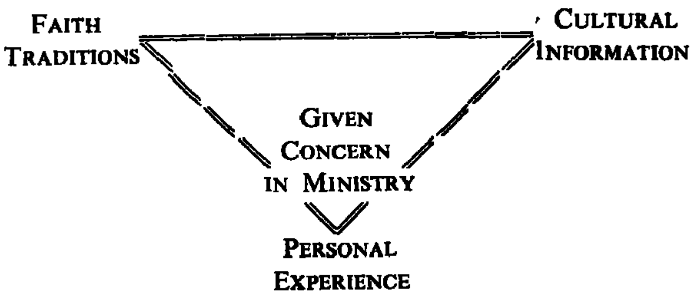
So far, the above methods have stressed the interaction of *two poles* in theological reflection: pastoral experience and faith traditions. And yet, we are aware that all experience is coloured by cultural overtones, and every human situation is influenced by historical antecedents as well as by social biases and values. Those who propose the methods already discussed acknowledge this fact by insisting upon a *thorough but critical understanding* of the human problematic. Those factors that add to a clarification of just what is happening have to be taken into consideration, while others — like slogans, prejudices and too quick generalisations — are to be questioned and perhaps excluded as unhelpful toward a realistic grasp of the situation.

We are becoming more and more aware, as well, that even our faith traditions are subject to strong social and cultural biases. One group's idea of the universal, someone has noted, need not be a universal idea. Our concepts of God may well be the reflections of the

society we live in.[7] It is difficult, too, to distill the authentic and timeless message of the Gospel from the historical, cultural, political and social contexts in which it is proclaimed and reflected upon. In fact, it might be used to justify the ways of a dominant class of people, unless we are constantly able to sift its bedrock truth from cultural and social accretions.[8]

For these reasons, we might more realistically speak of a *tripolar model* in theological reflection, instead of a bipolar one, with the three sources of relevant information being personal experience in ministry, our faith traditions *and* cultural data, all shedding light on a particular pastoral concern. Such a model might be depicted as follows:[9]

A Tripolar Model for Theological Reflection



Theological reflection would begin with *personal and community awareness* of a given pastoral concern or situation. Such an awareness would include not only facts and ideas but also other facets of personal and group experience, like feelings, attitudes, biases and convictions. Moreover, it would take into account the active expression of a community's beliefs, coloured by its traditional Christian mind-set, an experience which we usually call the *sensus fidelium.*

If personal experience is the usual starting point for theological reflection, a certain priority of importance is however owed to our Christian *faith tradition,* for the revelation contained in them (despite historical conditioning, differing theological interpretations and even their misuse through the years and centuries) is still *normative,* insofar as it uncovers for us in a unique and exceptional way God's saving action in history.[10] While ministers in the field cannot be expected

7. James H. CONE, "The Social Context of Theology", in *Doing Theology Today* (Ed Choan-Seng SONG), Madras. Christian Literature Society, 1976, p. 23.
8. Lukas VISCHER, "Introduction" in *Doing Theology Today*, p. xi.
9. See *Method in Ministry*, p. 14.
10. Ibid., p. 95.

to assess these traditions critically, they can and should be familiar with them, acknowledging and appreciating the formative role of scripture, church history and theology, and their importance in finding an adequate faith response to pastoral concerns. There is need here for us to keep abreast, as much as is possible, with both scriptural and theological developments. Reading is required if our faith understanding is not to become so impoverished as to be incapable of throwing any light on our problems. While we need not be experts, we should show an active interest in our faith traditions by "befriending" them: "The image of 'befriending' suggests that a more-than-intellectual grasp is required for ministry. The minister's familiarity with the tradition must include both critical awareness of and comfort with the diverse testimony of the tradition on a specific pastoral concern."[11] Again, part of this tradition is the *sensus fidelium*, or the lived experience of the faith community we belong to, passed on from one generation to the next. It should not surprise us that the *sensus fidelium* — the experience of the community lived today as an outgrowth of yesterday – should overlap both poles of experience and faith traditions, for we are products of our past — in faith and in history. Our present situation is certainly influenced by "the faith of our fathers" somehow enfleshed in the life of this community. So understood, the *sensus fidelium* would also be part of the third pole for theological reflection, as well: cultural information.

Cultural information arises from the way a given society or group of people perceives and understands the basic realities of life, such as the human person, community, success, failure, suffering, death, etc. How a given culture understands and copes with these realities is revealed through its history and philosophy, its symbols (including language) and mores, its sciences and institutions. There is also a strong cultural dimension to a society's predominant *religious beliefs*, as well as in its *economic and political systems*. These cultural influences represent a mixed and ambiguous factor, partly complementary and partly antithetical to Christian life. In either case, we cannot afford to neglect them in any serious attempt at theological reflection.

The *closed* triangle in the above model for theological reflection is significant. *All three poles* of relevant information must be brought into constant contact with one another to help us define, understand and act upon our situation in ministry. The encounter between our experience, our faith and our cultural background may be a congenial one, if the information happens to be mutually confirming and enlightening. But it can also be a tense and challenging one. Still, each

11. Ibid., p. 17

of the poles of the model must be allowed freely and fully to assert itself, in order to make the "trilogue" genuine, open and complete. Otherwise, the purpose of *theological* reflection would remain unfulfilled, as the following diagram should indicate:

FAITH TRADITIONS ← *Theoretical* → CULTURAL INFORMAITON

↖ *Fundamentalist* ↘ ↗ *Secular* ↙

PERSONAL EXPERIENCE

As the authors of *Method in Ministry* point out:

> In a reflection in which tradition simply interprets experience, without consideration of cultural information (whether through neglect of the exegetical sciences on the interpretation of scripture or of psychological and anthropological understanding of the human person and groups of people), the conclusion will be *fundamentalistic* Also, in a reflection which is simply a dialogue between cultural information and individual experience, the conclusion (and, of course, the reflection itself) will *not* be *specifically Christian*. although it may be "religious" in the sense that it reflects cultural or "civil" religious themes. Finally, a reflection which is essentially a dialogue between the Christian tradition and cultural information (whether philosophy, philology or science), to the neglect of personal experience, will tend to yield conclusions of a more *theoretical* nature.[12] (Emphasis added.)

To validate and implement this tripolar model, a *three-stage methodology* is suggested to facilitate the fruitful interchange of relevant information: attending, asserting, and acting.[13] (The first stage of *attending* would correspond to the first two steps of the *schema* previously cited.)

1. *Attending*: Seeking out all the information available about a particular concern or situation in ministry — from personal experience, our faith traditions and other cultural sources. This necessarily involves a sensitive (empathic), active, yet critical listening to all three poles of relevant data. It requires as well a respectful openness even to challenging and opposing views, suspending premature judgments

12. Ibid., p. 96.
13. Ibid., p 21f. I have substituted "acting" for decision-making as the third stage of this proposed method, not just for alliterative purposes, but to stress the importance of a true commitment to change and action in theological reflection done in the midst of human situations in ministry. I am aware that action follows upon reflection in the praxis and so is properly outside the latter. On the other hand, action could be said to be already a part of the dynamic will to take a stand and to risk change.

for the time being, without necessarily agreeing with these opinions. Finally, it calls for the ability to listen to the *intrapersonal* dialogue that emerges from the encounters with each pole of information. One indication that we have in fact "attended" to the evidence is when we are able to rephrase and summarise accurately all that we have heard.

2. *Asserting*: Engaging the information arising from the first stage in a process of mutual clarification and challenge, so that we might expand and deepen our insight into the problem. Such a "trilogue" is vital to theological reflection for, while we believe that God can be found in all three sources, or poles, of information, the data emerging from each that is relevant to our pastoral concern is *partial* and limited. Assertiveness stands midway between *laisser-faire* non-assertiveness, which hinders us from sharing a conviction, and aggressiveness, when we try to force our convictions on others. Freely (but not stubbornly) stating what we believe to be true, we nonetheless respect the views and convictions of others.

3. *Acting*: Moving from insight, through decision or discernment, to concrete pastoral action. The interacting and assertive (confronting) trilogue should generate some useful insights which, in turn, are to be translated into action Theological reflection, especially in ministry, must flow back into involvement and commitment to action Otherwise, it becomes little more than an intellectual game or armchair theorising. Our faith-enlightened understanding should lead to a decision to change what can be changed. In discerning possible options, we may have to engage in problem analysis, conflict resolution and even the strategies of community organisation. Having decided upon a particular option, we try to implement it and subsequently evaluate and reflect upon the consequences The *praxis* is a never-ending one: as theological reflection flows into pastoral action, so that action flows back into theological reflection.

D. Some Questions to Initiate the Process

1. *Attending*: "Interviewing" *all* the available sources of relevant information:

a. *In General*

i. Do we find ourselves reasonably *open* and free from prejudice with regard to the factors that might be involved in this particular issue ? Or will our perceptions be coloured by personal biases, inner resistance, or pressures from outside influences ?

ii. Are we able and willing to try to see beneath the appearance of things, by critically examining factors and causes ?

b. *Attending to Personal Experience*

i. What have been the *experiences and observations* of each of us with regard to this pastoral issue ? (No rambling stories here, but clear and concise facts, and to the point.)

ii. Are we aware of the *feelings and attitudes* that are awakened in us as a result of our involvement in this problematic ? What motives might be at the root of our concern ? Are we genuinely trying to meet the needs of others, or might we be making use of them to serve our own needs ?

iii. Can we understand and respect the *experience of others* — first of all, of our *co-workers* who might be expected to share our own basic convictions; secondly, of the *people directly involved* in the situation, whose experience and perceptions may not in fact tally with our own; and, finally, of *other secular and non-Christian voices* which may challenge our own views ? Are we able to enter the world of these others and accurately paraphrase their views ?

c. *Attending to Faith Traditions*

i. What does the *written* word of God (OT and NT) have to tell us about this particular situation, e.g. from the prophets, the history of Israel, the life and teachings of Jesus, the experience of the post-resurrection community ? What patterns, images or analogies might be applied to this human problematic, to help us better to understand, in faith, just what is happening ? (A *correct* interpretation of scripture is necessary for intelligent theological reflection.)

ii. What does the *history* of the Church (the various "traditions") as well as the history of this particular community add, to help us interpret and clarify just what is happening in this pastoral situation ?

iii. What does our *theology* (systematic or moral) have to say in addressing this concern, e.g., Christology, ecclesiology, theologies of the priesthood of Jesus, of suffering, of the kingdom, of vocation, of the laity ?

iv. What has been our own *personal faith experience* in similar situations ? Does what is happening here and now conform with our community orientation, or does it jar with it ?

d. *Attending to Cultural Information*

i. What are the *commonly held beliefs* (including *religious* ones) of the people directly concerned and involved in this situation ? Where do they come from ?

ii. What *dominant philosophy* (assumptions, biases, insights and convictions) is at work here ? What meanings and values are at least implicitly at stake here ? And what is their source ? How are these values and meanings *organised* in society, e.g., through its institutions and systems (social, economic, political, religious, educational, familial) and its communications media ?

iii. What, *historically*, has contributed to this situation ?

e. At the End of this Phase

i. Do we feel that we have a sufficient grasp of the situation, and of the three poles of relevant information, to make reasonably accurate statements about just what is happening ?

ii. If not, then what other resources or what further information is required ? Where must we make our additional inquries ?

2. *Asserting*: Letting each source of information, relevant to the concern in question, give an honest and full account of itself, neither downplaying age-old beliefs and customs as mere ignorance and deceit nor agreeing with them uncritically.

a. Have we succeeded in bringing *all* the data into dynamic contact and balanced engagement with one another ? In other words, have we given "equal time" and attention to all three sources of information — listening with respect, responding with honest conviction, challenging, confronting searching together ?

b. In what way do these three sources of information complement one another in addressing themselves to this particular situation ? And where are the divergencies and incongruencies ? How does the interchange of views shed light upon our common concern ? (To avoid argumentative tangents, always keep the concrete problematic in focus.)

c. Where do we agree are the areas in the problematic or pastoral concern that call for change, to bring them into alignment with Gospel values and the Truth, i.e., God's promises being fulfilled, his will being done ?

3. *Acting*: Seeking to implement faith-enlightened pastoral action, through a deepened and "traditioned" awareness of the problem or concern and the discernment of options.

a. What are the main *insights* that have emerged so far, with regard to this concrete pastoral situation ?

b. How might these insights be concretised in our decisions and commitment to action ? What *course of action* seems called for as a result of this reflection ?

c. What are the *values* behind this change-effort ? *Whose* are they ? Similarly, what are the concrete *objectives* and the *motivation* to pursue them ?

d. How will the *group directly involved* in the pastoral situation be included in the planning, decision-making and implementation of the option taken ? Will they be consulted at all ? What resistance might be encountered, and how can it best be handled ?

e. What system of *accountability* and *evaluation will* best effect the implementation of the chosen plan of action ?

Appendix

Some Areas of Current Pastoral Concerns

(The following represents something of a *general* consensus of *specific* pastoral experiences reported by pastoral trainees returning from ministry in every region of the country. The combined reports have no doubt lost some of the uniqueness of individual situations. General concerns though they may be, it is not my intention to propose them as topics for discussion Rather, it is hoped that they will stimulate us to uncover similar concerns in our own ministry, but with the detailed nuances that only we and our own environment can supply. Theological reflection in ministry always goes better when participants can focus on a *specific* issue of concern to all of them.)

1. *Evangelisation*

a. These days, "evangelisation" seems to mean so many things to so many different people that it has lost much of its power to motivate and unite us in our mission. In fact, even the *missionary* aspect of the Church in India has come into question, not only because of the respect shown toward non-Christian religions by Vatican II (which has evoked a new interest in inculturation and inter-religious dialogue), but also because of the pressing social, political and economic problems we face, which draw most of our attention and drain almost all of our energies.

b. Can the term "missionary" effectively be divorced from the country's colonial past and from our churches' lingering reliance upon foreign funds ?

c. There are *obvious tensions* within the Church and her various sub-groups today: between evangelisation and liberation, the service of the faith and the promotion of justice, proclamation and political involvement, institutional sluggishness and individual charism, concern for survival and hunger for justice. They cause considerable division and misunderstanding, and "casualties" have been numerous. Need these tensions be inevitable and destructive ? Can we ever hope that they will be resolved?

2. *Development and Economic Aid*

a. What is the relationship between developmental (social) work and our proclaiming of Gospel values ? Has not such development, at least in some parts of the country, originated from unconscious ideologies and led to unexpected and unwanted consequences ? True compassion for the poor has, in more than a few cases, engendered a certain paternalism on our part, and its corollary, dependency on the part of the people. The result has been the gradual emergence of power relationships which in turn have led to a growing alienation between missionaries and the people. Are such outcomes acceptable in the ministry of the Word ? Are they avoidable ?

b. Does short-term economic aid, initiated from above and outside for the beneficiaries, always lead to their long-term development ?

Has not just the opposite been the case in many of the dioceses of the north ? And cannot such a policy sometimes cause serious problems for Indian personnel succeeding foreigners who may have had greater access to such aid ?

c. Consider the following attitudes about helping those in need: (i) that of the zealous missionary who asks himself, "What can we do for these people ?" and (ii) the non-Christian stereotype who might reply, "Don't do anything ! You will only spoil them and build up false expectations, leaving them worse than before." Is there another way ? And do we find any precedents in the Gospel ?

d. Private and especially missionary development agencies have gained a lot more respect and trust from the people than their government counterparts. They seem to be more honest and efficient. But should we Christians be satisfied with this ? If we seem more honest, whence comes this virtue ? And does this comparison between missionary propriety and government corruptibility always help the Christian community ? Finally, should such parallel developmental organisations be encouraged ?

3. *Preaching*

a. A practical problem arises for the minister of the Word when he tries to make the day's message a "living" word for a community wherein all ages and widely differing backgrounds are represented, or when pastoral demands preclude the necessary familiarity that a minister should have with his congregation and its problems. How to face these difficulties of the message and of the messenger ?

b. What precisely is the minister's *prophetic role* in proclaiming the message of the Gospel ? To what extent are we here bound to meet the expectations of the people ? Many of us find it difficult to challenge congregations with true Gospel values. Why is this so ? Is it proper to "scold" from the pulpit ? Finally, what is our basic *motivation* when we prepare a homily ?

c. How to translate our faith understanding into a meaningful and moving message for others, while avoiding theological cliches and jargon ? The problem of vocabulary and of finding expressions and examples suitable to a given group is a fundamental one. If we conclude that the traditional sermon format is a somewhat outmoded form of communication, then what alternative might be acceptable ? How to get the people more involved in the communication ? For youth, especially, our preaching seldom seems effective. We do not seem to have much to say to the young about God; either they have heard it all before and are not very impressed with our re-telling, or they are exposed to much more effective media than sermons, which exert a much stronger influence upon their lives. How to meet this challenge ?

d. What to do about the current strong appeal of various Pentecostal sects now spread throughout the country. Though having a somewhat narrow view of theology, their fundamentalist approach to scripture undoubtedly has a powerful hold on many Christians. What should be our attitude toward this religious phenomenon ?

e. Many, if not most, Christians seem to identify their faith with its cultic expressions. They are satisfied with fulfilling the basic obligations, participating in popular processions, and having their own private devotions. Can we — *should* we — lead such people to see their faith as a much more comprehensive response, coterminous with all of life ?

4. *The Personal Needs of the Minister*

a. The young priest at the beginning of his ministry often finds himself under strong pressures to conform — to his superiors' wishes, to the expectations of his parishioners or students, to current ideologies. Doing so would win for him much-needed acceptance, appreciation and recognition. At the same time, he might experience within himself a strong pull toward newer and less tried forms of ministry, more in keeping with his understanding of the Gospel and his personal convictions. These, however, offer little hope of fast, or even sure, results. Moreover, there is every chance that he might, in following this orientation, meet with rejection, isolation and failure. In such a situation, what is he to do, and how might he be helped by his companions and superiors ?

b. The typical priest is supposed to be a task-oriented individual for whom, by nature and formation, the achievement of particularly difficult goals has a strong appeal. Often, he seems to go about his work in a compulsive, perfectionistic way — more to win approval and recognition (though he may be unaware of this), than from any real satisfaction from the work itself. He comes to measure his worth from the recognition he gets, and when he fails to gain sufficient appreciation for his efforts, he tends to become discouraged, disillusioned and even resentful. What is at the root of this problem, and how might such a development be counteracted ?

5. *The Church We Serve*

a. Dulles describes five models of the Church. Many of us, conditioned by our environment as well as by the strong appeal of current theological trends, seem inclined toward a *sixth*: the Church *of the poor*. How seriously do we take our so-called "option for the poor"? If we are to be consistent, then need we not at least question some of the accepted ways of doing things in formation and in ministry ?

b. Granted that no one model of the Church can exhaust its mystery, it is nonetheless true that the model we consistently follow tends to influence our attitudes and behaviour as ministers, and these in turn are formative especially of the newer Christian communities developed by us. Many of our conflicts in ministry, especially among ourselves, seem to arise from an unstated confusion of these models. If pre-Vatican II theology seemed to stress the Church as *institution*, post-Vatican II theology lays greater emphasis on the Church as *people*: but in reality the Church encompasses *both* models. Instead of holding to one model stubbornly, or shifting from one to the other arbitrarily, should we not try to live with a Church that is *both* people *and*

institution ? But then how to cope with the inevitable tensions, in order to make them creative instead of destructive to our unity ?

c. What is our style of leadership ? Is it confined to a spiritual or cultic role ? Do we encourage active and responsible lay collaboration ? Are we open to honest dissent, or must we always have our way ? Why is it that, in some sections of the country at least, there are considerable anti-clerical feelings, most noticeably among the young but also among older, less demonstrative, Christians ? What is behind this vocal resistance or sullen apathy ? Is it addressed to the message, or to the messenger ? Can it be but another example of conflicting models and expectations ?

Continued from p. 268

The attempt is highly successful, as going through the reflections makes clear to the reader. Jesus and his Gospel come alive here on every page This is not to say that the reflections offer ready-made sermons, universally applicable, but they provide a model for contextualising the gospel, especially in a third world context J DUPUIS, S J.

Third World Theology

Irruption of the Third World: Challenge to Theology. Edited by Virginia FABELLA and Sergio TORRES. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Book*, 1983. Pp. xix-280. $ 10.95.

The fifth International Conference of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) took place in New Delhi, August 1981. EATWOT, as is well known, was created at a first intercontinental meeting held at Dar-es-Salaam in 1976 This first assembly was followed by those intra-continental conferences, one for each of the three continents of the Third World. Africa (Accra, 1977); Asia (Wennappuwa, 1979), Latin America (São Paulo, 1980) The proceedings of the four previous assemblies have been reviewed in this periodical (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p. 386; 1981, pp. 348-349; 1982, p 308).

Fifth in the series of conferences, the New Delhi assembly (August 17-29, 1981) was the second one held on an intercontinental basis. This is not without significance. After the intra-continental meetings had focused on concerns of human liberation specific to each continent, the New Delhi conference was designed to pool experiences together and thereby to achieve a mutual enrichment of perspectives. The common thrust created at Dar-es-Salaam remains but, while distinct continental emphases also persist, it has been broadened and deepened.

The readers of VIDYAJYOTI have been broadly introduced to the New Delhi meeting through the publication in our pages of the Final Statement (1982, pp 81-96), of two important papers by S. Croatto and A Pieris (1982, pp 54-69, 158-170, 227-245), and of a report of the meeting by S Rayan (1982, pp. 106-127)

The volume now under review contains the main proceedings of the conference One section is devoted to consolidated reports on theological perspectives and priorities in each of the three continents as these were viewed in pre-assembly sectional meetings Another includes, besides the papers of S. Croatto and A Pieris mentioned above, two others concerned with a methodological approach to, and the socio-economic and political context of third world theology, by J. R. Chandran and Ajit Roy, respectively A last and interesting section is made up of past-assembly reflections and attempts at evaluation from various perspectives including Asian, African, Latin American, U S. Black, and Third World woman. This section ends with a soul-searching examination by two European participants of the challenge created for the first world and its theology by the "Irruption of the Third World".

Perusal of this volume leaves the reader in no doubt that between Dar-es-Salaam and New Delhi Third World Theology has gained considerably in depth and articulation. Its emergence is a sign of hope for the oppressed sections of humanity and a promise of renewal for the Church's mission to them.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

The Sense of the Holy: Godly Fear

George THOTTUNGAL, S.J.*

POPE Paul II spoke, in his Address to the Sacred College Concerning the Jubilee Year (December 23, 1982), of the need "to rediscover the sense of sin, the loss of which is connected with that more radical and hidden loss of the sense of God". Again in the Bull of Indiction of the Jubilee the Pope, reiterating the same thought, relates the sense of God to the Biblical concept of the fear of God, and hopes that "with the Jubilee there may be refined in the faithful the gift of the 'fear of God', given by the Holy Spirit". The Pope's words forcibly remind us — if they are not an unconscious echo — of a powerlul pastoral letter by Cardinal Suhard of Paris, "Le Sens de Dieu", in which the Cardinal lamented: "The sense of the sacred has been lost", and identified this loss as *le mal du siècle*.[1]

Fear of God in the Bible

This sense of God is substantially the same as the Biblical fear of God. It is a response to the Holy or the transcendent. In the Bible it is a synonym and an epitome of true religion. The Biblical concept of Godly fear is deep reverence, subliming into the breathless hush of adoration: as when Moses is told to take off his shoes on holy ground, or when Isaiah contemplates the seraphim calling out, "Holy, Holy, Holy". It is the awesome reverence that moves the psalmist to the prayer:

> My very bones cry out,
> Lord, who is like thee ? (Ps. 35 : 10, NEB)

The psalmist feels in his bones the majesty, power and holiness of God and his whole being stretches towards him.

Godly fear in the Bible combines fear, piety and religion. The fear of the Lord is not only compatible with love and all that is tender and attractive in a loving, caring, provident God; nor with friendship,

---

*Fr George THOTTUNGAL, S.J., teaches systematic theology at St Thomas Aquinas Seminary, Nairobi, Kenya.

1. Emmanuel Cardinal SUHARD, "The Meaning of God", *The Church Today* (Chicago: Fides Publications, 1953), p. 180.

with covenant relation; it is necessarily intertwined with them. It is also the basis of wisdom, knowledge, virtue and trust. It has very little in common with our earthly fears, stemming from insecurities, existential anxieties and anguish. The fear of the Lord urges man to walk in the ways of the Lord, and ensures a high level of dedication.

When Abraham's hand is raised aloft to slaughter his son the angel intervenes saying (Gen 22: 12):

> Now I know that you fear God, seeing you have not withheld your son, your only son from me (RSV).
>
> Now I know that you are a God-fearing man (NEB).
>
> I know now how devoted you are to God (NAB).
>
> Now I know how dedicated you are to God (Anchor).

The Anchor Bible justifies its translation in a note:

> Literally 'that you fear God, that you are a God-fearing man' But the manifest stress is not so much on fear, or even awe, as on absolute dedication.

The different translations point up the rich and varied dimensions of Godly fear, as a few additional texts illustrate:

> And now Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all his ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, and to keep the commandments and statutes of the Lord, which I command you this day for your good? (Deut 10: 12-13).

Yahweh speaks of fear and love in the same breath; for they are not opposed, but complementary. Fear gives the special quality or modality to love of God, blending with it to form reverential love. It is idle to imagine that love for the creator can be identical in sense with human love, be it eros or agape. As a Jewish scholar points out:

> A love of God, not preceded by and built upon a fear and awe of him, is but a hollow and insincere love.[2]
>
> Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him, and on those who hope in his steadfast love (Ps 33. 18).

The parallelism of the lines shows that the second line is iterative (or cumulative with a slight addition to the first), so that fearing God and hoping in his steadfast love are intimately connected, if not identical.

> The friendship of the Lord is for those who fear him, and he makes known to them his covenant (Ps 25: 14).
>
> Is not fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope ? (Job 4: 6).

---

2. Rabbi Solomon SCHONFELD, quoted in Malcolm HAY, *The Prejudices of Pascal* (London: Neville Spearman, 1962), p. 63.

Thus Biblical fear embraces awe, love and integrity of life — the whole of religion.

In the New Testament, since Christ came to reveal the Father, the love of the Father is more prominent than fear of the creator. This is a commonplace, obvious to any one familiar with the 'Abba' passages (Jesus dared, in a society in which the holiest and most exalted name of God was absolute taboo, to teach his followers to call God '*Abba*'), the mercy parables of Luke, John's emphasis on the Father's loving initiative and 'the greater love' and with Paul's summing up of the entire salvation history in the mysterious plan.

Yet even in the New Testament sufficient emphasis is laid on fear of God in the best sense:

1. The Virgin Mary did not hold herself above fear of God when she sang out her soul: "And his mercy is on those who fear him".

2. Whenever there was divine visitation, fear fell on the persons involved, starting on the first page of Luke with Zachary before the angel. The shepherds at the nativity and the women at the tomb of the risen Lord, on the most joyous occasions, are seized with a divine trembling.

3. "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man" was the reaction of Peter after the miraculous catch of fish. François Mauriac, in his life of Jesus, comments perceptively on this text: even today, when one sees his sinfulness in all its horror and filth, it is a sign that God is not far. Peter's words obviously are not to be taken literally — the Lord did not. It is remarkable that later, after another miraculous catch of fish (or John's version of the same), Peter jumped into the dark heaving waters and swam across, as the dawn was breaking and Jesus stood on the shore.

4. When Christ or the apostles, as related in Acts, worked signs and wonders, fear seized the onlookers.

5. A righteous man like Cornelius is described as "a devout man who feared God with all his household".

6. The early Christian community, according to Acts (9:31), was "walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit it was multiplied".

7. At the close of The Apocalypse John asks: "Who shall not fear and glorify thy name, O Lord"? (15:4).

8. It *should not be forgotten that Isaiah* (11:2ff) *had foretold* that fear of the Lord was a gift with which the future messiah would

be endued. And Jesus' whole life is an eloquent witness of reverence for the Farher and his will.

For centuries the Christian community had no problem in accepting the notion of Godly fear. Piety for the average Christian meant love and fear of the Lord rolled into one; and it is still so for the unsophisticated. But the sophisticated moderns read into the word 'fear' all that they have learnt from depth psychology, and turn irreconcilable opponents of 'fear' in any sense. This attitude has had its repercussions even on liturgical prayer. The Opening Prayer of the Mass of the XII Sunday of the Year (the former II Sunday after Pentecost) reads:

> *Sancti nominis tui, Domine, timorem pariter ac amorem fac nos habere perpetuum....*

This was literally translated in the old missal as:

> Grant, Lord, that we may have a perpetual fear and love of your name....

Though the old Latin text remains unchanged in the new missal, the English version made by the International Committee on English in the Liturgy reads:

> Father, guide and protector of your people, grant us unfailing respect for your name, and keep us always in your love....

The offensive word 'fear' is dropped, and 'respect' replaces it; and the effect is banal. The old prayer is hollowed out of the profound scriptural sense of awe, reverence and love, grown out of a three thousand year old tradition. This is not a purely stylistic quarrel; the style reflects a weakening of the sense of God.

Godly Fear in Islam and Hinduism

The Old Testament uses the word 'fear' in its ordinary sense also: that of painful emotion caused by insecurity or danger. But it uses one word *yir'â* for the awesome reverential feeling for God, and another *pahad* for the mundane fear of mankind. *Yir'ât 'elohim* is a sacrosanct phrase for fear of the Lord. Whereas common fear, as when Jacob is in heavy trouble with Esau, is *paḥad*. It is interesting to note that in Arabic too the Koran uses separate words to express fear of God and other fears: *khauf* is fear in the ordinary sense; *taqwā* is Godly fear and implies responsibility before and under God.

Sura II, 2 of the Koran reads:

> This is the Book.
> In it is guidance sure without doubt
> To those who fear God.

The annotator comments on the word *taqwā* used in this context:

> *taqwa* signifies: 1) fear of God which according to the writer of Proverbs is the beginning of wisdom, 2) restraint, or guarding one's tongue, hand and heart from evil; 3) hence righteousness, piety, good conduct.[3]

Orthodox Jewry and the Islamic world have preserved a deep fear of God. Why has Islam not only survived, but also remained vigorous and aggressive? One reason is that the Muslims, by and large, are a God-fearing people, who can be seen prostrate on the ground in thoroughfares and on railway platforms at stated hours of prayer with their faces turned to Mecca. The solemn *Ramadan* fast, the great public bond of penitence between Allah and Islam, is a deeply religious phenomenon. The thought of Ayatollah Khomeini and of the Muslim Brotherhood and other extremist groups in Egypt, Iran, Syria, Morocco and Tunisia may give us a cold sweat. But that should not prevent us from asking a very pertinent question: what is the secret of the power and influence of Islam over one-sixth of the world? Further, is there something good in their ferocious opposition to the 'idols' of western civilisation? Reviewing a recent book, *Muhammad* by Martin Lings, Kathleen Raine refers to the painful belligerency of Islam and asks apologetically:

> Horrified as we may be at recent events in Iran and elsewhere, have we not nevertheless to try to understand *the powerful sense of the sacred* that has motivated this often successful rival to Christianity?[4] (My italics.)

To return to the question of terminology. E. Classen, a philologist, says in his *Outlines of the History of the English Language*: "Language is the autobiography of a people." It reflects their emotions, ideas, religious sentiments, their ethos. The Dravidian languages, for instance, use single separate words for "elder brother' and 'younger brother', for 'elder sister' and 'younger sister', endearing terms grown out of the tender family ties, and written into the language. The genius of a language lies in a subtle exactitude in the expression of emotion. Hebrew and Arabic expressed the basic religious emotions of two semitic peoples by two distinct words and with precision. We, on the contrary, are using the same word 'fear', and in spite of qualifying, paraphrasing, explicating, make heavy weather of religious fear in its fullest and deepest sense.

Classical Greek used *eusébeia* for 'fear of the gods', a term apparently debased by usage in the context of the pagan gods, so that neither the Septuagint nor the New Testament has much use for it. The Latin *timor* and its synonyms do not make the fine distinction we

3. Abdullah Yusuf Ali (ed.), *The Holy Qur-an* (1934).
4. *The Tablet*, 12 November, 1983, p. 1109.

are looking for. Sanskrit has only *bhaya* for both meanings. Modern languages (as far as I can verify) are not in a more fortunate position.

Are we reading too much into a lexical matter ? If we have the authentic Biblical sentiment why bother about the imprecise terminology. But have we retained the substance of Biblical fear ?

When we approach Hinduism, we may have an a priori feeling that Godly fear cannot be dominant in it. For in the mainstream of Hindu thought, *advaita*, the *ātman* is ultimately identified with the *Brahman* But *advaita* is not necessarily the mainstream of Hindu religion, a viewpoint more and more recognised today. The sectarian monotheistic trends, both vaiṣṇava and śaiva of South India, have had much more influence on Hindu life and religious feeling outside a relatively small intellectual circle Some Hindu traditions have much to say about God as transcendent and awe-inspiring The Gītā XI is an outstanding example that readily comes to mind. Krishna shows "the transcendent divine form" to Arjuna on request until, overcome with majesty and terror, Arjuna cries out:

> Deep is my delight, but still my dread is greater.
> Show me now your other form, O Lord, be gracious.[5]

At a lower level, the Hindu pantheon has deities who inspire terror or demonic dread, of which the widely popular Durga or Kali of Calcutta is a conspicuous instance But this may not be typical of Hinduism, especially in the South.

A diverting episode from history brings home this aspect of the popular Hindu fear of demons and deities. Warren Hastings, the first British Governor General of India, was being impeached for high crimes and misdemeanours (from 1788 to 1795), by both Houses of Parliament. At one stage the counsel for defence argued that all the allegations against Hastings were false, because in the holy city of Benares, where Hastings was alleged to have perpetrated his worst crimes, the Hindus had erected a statue of the Governor General, in their holiest of temples, giving him a special niche in the Hindu pantheon. Edmond Burke for the prosecution retorted at once: No wonder, in a country where cholera, small-pox and wild fire were feared and placated, this terror, this scourge of Governor General Hastings, should have been honoured with a special votive shrine !

At the level of the more educated Hindus, certain doctrinal factors weaken the fear of God. At the back of the Hindu mind, whatever system of philosophy they adhere to, there is the assumption of rebirth,

5. Swami PRABHAVANANDA and C. ISHERWOOD, *The Song of God* (New York: New American Library, 1951), pp. 91-97.

one or more chances to improve on a person's performance in life. The text of Hebrews (9:27), "It is appointed for men to die once, and after that comes judgment", is a solemn warning to the average Christian; but it falls faint on Hindu ears. The *Purāṇas*, the lowest in the canon of their sacred books, do have baroque descriptions of Hell (*Naraga*), but their scriptures do not teach the doctrine of eternal punishment. The Hindu world-view, their concept of time and history, even their faith in the promise of Krishna that he would become reincarnate whenever righteousness declines and unrighteousness flourishes, tone down the awesome aspect of the divinity.

The numinous evokes in the Hindu wonder, contemplation, yearning; the *mysterium fascinans* is more dominant than the *mysterium tremendum*. An incident from the life of poet Rabindranath Tagore illustrates the sensitivity of the Hindu mind to the mysterious fascination of God's presence in Nature.

One early morning Tagore was crossing the vast maidan in Calcutta when the rays of the rising sun filtered through the rich foliage in golden splashes. He went on, and saw a cow followed by a calf, and was thrilled by the mother-love in the animal world. As he walked further on, he saw two small girls going to school hand in hand, a picture of innocence and felicity. As he proceeded he met a person whom he detested from the bottom of his heart; but on that glorious morning he felt like throwing his arms round the man's neck.[6] The mysterious beauty and holiness of life which sang through Nature, in the sunshine, in the love of the cow and of the children, purged his soul and brought on a spiritual uplift. Let it be noted that the lowing of the cow for the calf on the haunted moor in the twilight is, in Sanskrit poetry, a favourite image, symbolic of the Creator's clamorous urge for his creature, for the alienated creature that has wandered far from him like the calf that sprints away on its unsteady legs on the dewy grass in the bright morning.

The Sense of the Holy in R. Otto

We cannot discuss the sense of the holy without paying homage to Rudolf Otto and his widely acclaimed classic: *The Idea of the Holy.* His thesis is well known and, without wanting to rehash his ideas, I shall try to throw light on a point that has probably been obscured by his interpreters. Otto identifies the holy with the 'numinous', the mysterious quality of the divine. In the encounter with the numinous, man discovers his total dependence and a sense of his

6. I am indebted to a Tamil biography, *Poet Tagore*, by Dr M. VARADARAJAN, Madras.

creaturehood. Otto describes the numinous as "wholly other", transcendent, awesome. Ancient Israel was staggered by the vast gulf that separated man from God. The numinous makes on the beholders a twofold impact: that of the *mysterium tremendum* and of the *mysterium fascinans*. The former fills him with fear of a wide range, arising chiefly from man's unworthiness before God. The later fascinates and attracts him. So far no problem of interpretation.

Nearly all commentators of Otto ascribe to the *mysterium tremendum* a repellent quality for which I find no basis in Otto's text. J. L. McKenzie writes:

> The effect of the numinous is twofold and paradoxical: it is 'tremendous', fearful and so *repels*, but at the same time it is 'fascinating' and attracts man [7] (My italics.)

Similarly Walther Eichrodt focusses on the tension between repulsion and attraction:

> Religious fear is ... an oscillation between *repulsion* and attraction, between *mysterium tremendum* and *fascinans* [8] (My italics)

Both writers, and many more in the same vein, stress the repelling element in the mysterious fear instilled by the numinous If their interpretations were based on analysis of encounters with the numinous in the Bible, few would think of crossing swords with Scripture scholars of such eminence But it is presented as the objective interpretation of Rudolf Otto's thesis, which I would seriously question.

Otto says:

> The feeling of it (*mysterium tremendum*) may at times come sweeping like a gentle tide [9]
>
> It has its wild and demonic forms and can sink to an almost grisly horror and shuddering [10]

Otto speaks of "the element of daunting 'awefulness' and 'majesty'" in the *mysterium tremendum*.[11] 'Daunting' means intimidating, discouraging; but not repellent, a word which I have not found in him in this context, except when he speaks of the demonic forms of the numinous which can be worse than repelling. In its wild and demonic forms it can cause "grisly horror and shuddering". But we are not dealing with demonic forms primarily. The interpreters of Otto

---

7. J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1965), s.v 'Holy'.
8. Walther Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press, 1967), Vol. 2, p. 269.
9. R. Otto, *The Idea of the Holy* (London: OUP, 1950), p. 12.
10. Ibid., p. 13.
11. Ibid., p. 31.

contend that the *mysterium tremendum*, a component of the numinous, has a universal repellent character, so that in all encounters with the numinous man will experience repulsion and attraction. No. In its purer forms the numinous does not have this repellent quality. The *mysterium tremendum* will certainly humble and abash by its transcendence and the awareness it gives of man's finiteness; but it need not repel. To inspire lofty fear is not the same as to repel; to frighten is not the same as to frighten away.

It would not be correct to ascribe a repellent character as necessary component of the *mysterium tremendum*, to treat this power as universally valid in all numinous phenomena, and to explain all experience of the numinous as a dialectical synthesis of attraction and repulsion.

This point is of some importance. As long as we identify the awesome mysterious as a repelling force, the fear it generates will be degrading. As long as we associate any repulsive character with the divine we shall remain averse and allergic to the idea of the fear of God, say what you will, do what you may to exalt the Biblical concept of fear as awe and reverence.

Further, if repulsion is taken seriously as universal characteristic of the *mysterium tremendum*, more repulsion should result in less attraction. This is not actually the case. The fearful elements give a quality to the attraction, and even enhance it. In Scripture fear and love go together; fear gives its specific quality or modality to man's love of God. The awesome mysterious is itself the mysterious fascination.

The ambivalence of religious fear can be illustrated by a few complex experiences of life, where attraction and fear coexist and enhance each other. Take, for instance, the perils and thrills of mountaineering. If the perils and fears are removed the adventure and thrill will be lost. The former does not repel; on the contrary, it is part of the spell cast by the mountain.

The young bride who has not lost her innocence, on approaching her first nuptial night, will presumably experience a multitude of feelings, the whole gamut of love and fear, ecstasy and awe. Yet there is no feeling of repulsion, if she is normal, healthy, uninhibited by morbid experience or defective education. On the other hand, a woman who has had all sorts of experiences, and whose heart is drained before marriage, in the same context, may have no fear at all. But will the attraction and love be greater? This means that the fearful and awesome feelings do not pull in the opposite direction; rather they heighten the attraction and give it its unique quality.

The interest of a good ghost srory depends on the mysterious unknown which strikes terror into the reader. That is its attraction as well: the weird, the eerie, the demonic grip the reader, and keep him out of breath in suspense. They do not act as a repelling counterforce, unless the reader happens to be a man or woman of weak nerves. Rudyard Kipling in "My Own True Ghost Story" describes a night before the ghost appears: "A restless wind shook the stiff toddy palms all night like the rattle of dry bones." This splendidly evocative description not only touches the aesthetic faculty, but also stirrs up from primeval depths an indefinite fear of the unknown which is integral to the interest and attraction of the story.

In all these examples there is fear that does not repel; there is beauty that has terror in it. On analogy with these facts and phenomena and assuming I have interpreted Otto correctly, I venture to suggest that there need be no repelling in the purer manifestations of the divine; and that the awesome itself can be an attraction. And so the deep sense of reverence and love which Godly fear implies, can be seraphically free from any taint of pain, except the pain and anxiety of one's own unworthiness joined to all the sweet joys of trust and surrender.

The Desacralised World of "Man Come of Age"

Godly fear, even when explained as deep reverence, does not enthuse moderns. Reverence is not a popular virtue in our sensitively egalitarian society. In fact, blazing irreverence for God and man, for authority and institutions, for the most cherished values, ideals and spiritual certainties of yesterday, is a characteristic of the modern world. To show reverence one must have the sense of the sacred. But men today want to do away with the sacred. Mircea Eliade tells us why:

> Man makes himself, and he only makes himself completely in proportion as he desacralises himself and the world. The sacred is his chief obstacle to freedom . . . He will not be truly free until he has killed the last God.[12]

Irreverence towards God is carried to all spheres of life. To topple a hero or to destroy a legend is the easiest way to win applause, and a safe bet for a successful biography. Lytton Strachey's cock-eyed view of Eminent Victorians is innocent fun compared to later biographies, the fulminations of the Angry Young Men of the Fifties, and more recent writings. Dean Swift, looked upon as a misanthrope by many, recognised on all hands to be the fiercest satirist of English literature had the grace to call Thomas More "the most virtuous English-

---

12. Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1957), p. 203.

man who ever lived".[13] Yet a new biography of the saint by Jasper Ridley, published in 1982, eulogises Wolsey and prefers the worldly 'statesman' to the 'fanatic' More.

There is nothing sacred in life; sex is debased, life is trivialised in contemporary fiction. David Lodge, critic and novelist, says:

> Society at large is questioning the value of monogamy itself ... school girls are put on the pill by their mothers, adultery is being institutionalised as a party game, and the arts and media abandoning all restraints in the depiction and celebration of sexuality.[14]

In today's "counter-culture of drugs, rock and casual sex", for all the irreverence for God and his values, the joy of living does not sing through life or literature. The alienation of man, arising from lack of stable relations, from lack of commitment and community, the divisiveness of modern society, the loneliness of modern man, not to be alleviated in a foreseeable future — these are the common themes of novel, drama and pop song.

There is a length to which society can and cannot go in irreverence and in desacralising life. You may get rid of superstitions in the name of "man come of age" or of the scientific temper. But there is a limit. The traditional African here in Nairobi believes God is dwelling on Mount Kenya, and that the five depressions on the graceful outline of the Ngong Hills were formed by the hand of God resting on the hills in benediction. The rationalist may choose to be flippant and derisive about the African's faith; but his faith is truer and more valid than the unimaginative, universal desacralising of life.

> Men need not regard the forest as sacred, or the tree, or the cow, but there is a limit to how much of his world he can desacralise and still find the kind of human satisfaction he needs.[15]

---

13. R. W. CHAMBERS, *Thomas More* (London: 1945), p. 277.
14. David LODGE, *How Far Can You Go* (London: Penguins, 1982), pp. 120ff.
15. E. J. SCHALLERT, "The Individual and the Community", in *Problems in Jesuit Asceticism* (Los Gatos, 1961), p 89; quoted in *The Way*, October 1973, p. 257.

Working Among Muslim Women

Sr Fatima, I.C.M.

TO condense the status of women in Islam to what can be said in a few pages is to run the risk of misrepresenting it. In this brief article I would like to limit myself to giving an illustration of the social position of those Muslim women who are my neighbours here in Patna They are the urban poor It is said that, in the urban areas, the poor constitute around 80% of the population Hence it can safely be assumed that what I share here may very well be applicable to a good number of Muslim women in India. Their unenviable situation calls forth an immediate response from Christian women to try to understand them and feel solidarity with them in their struggle for recognition as human beings

Social Position of Muslim Women

The Purdah system — the strict seclusion of women — as well as polygamy, inflicts a lot of fear and insecurity in the minds of the Muslim women with whom I have come in contact. Most of them are poor, illiterate and dependent on their menfolk They seldom leave their houses — rather, their overcrowded rooms The poverty in which they live and the possibility of being rejected by their husbands keep them silent in spite of their misery. They respond with fear to the demands of living a traditional life which suits their religious leaders. Besides all these, one can sense their constant fear of being victimized in communal outbreaks. The following few examples may be of some help in understanding these fears which dominate their lives.

By the age of ten most of the girls become responsible for a good part of the whole household. They go out to pick up coal, fetch water, prepare rotis and take care of their baby brothers and sisters. If they are fortunate enough, they get to learn some Urdu and to recite certain parts of the Quran. Shakeela, nine years of age, wanted very much to go to a school like the others, dressed in uniform and travelling by bus. She could have managed a uniform with little expense, and could have travelled by the school bus at a concessional rate; yet she was

forbidden by her father because she is a girl meant to observe Purdah, and thus not to be seen in the streets. In her case, as well as in many others, it was not poverty that prevented her from getting a basic education, but the strict adherence to a system which interprets the *izzat* (respectability) of a family on the capacity to keep its women indoors.

When a girl is about thirteen years of age she is practically confined to her house till she gets married. One has to protect her from undesirable outside contamination, so she gets completely isolated from public life. Ruby, for example, cherished our regular visits to her home and remarked: "This is the only break I have from seeing only my family members and from hearing nothing of what happens in the world outside."

Another girl, Parveen, came often to visit us under the pretext of being sick. As someone aptly said, all she needed was one aspirin and an hour of listening. Even those girls who are privileged to go to a high school have to go with 'burqa' and come straight back home. Once, while attending a social function in one such high school, I was astonished to see the male speaker addressing the girls by speaking through a mike kept in a far-off room. The girls faced a loud-speaker, not the actual person giving the speech, for he happened to be a member of the opposite sex. One can very well understand the strong feelings of the loneliness present among girls of this age. They gradually develop a dislike towards themselves for being girls.

Married women do not receive much justice either. While a young girl at least has the freedom to cry out, the women suffer in silence. They live under the constraint of fear and submission. They are afraid that, if they do anything to displease their husbands, they might be divorced, while their economic dependence on their husbands keeps them submissive and silent. Very often I have met women who seem to be preoccupied with the fear of their husbands leaving them for another woman. Afraid of the possible consequences — i.e., rejection, separation by divorce and greater poverty — they seek refuge in the practice of magic or in seeking medication for ailments induced by their plight. Those who seem to have failed become hysterical. For example, a year after her wedding, a young girl returned to her mother's house, for her husband had married another woman. She is considered a burden in her parents' home. She has fainting fits which affect her health as well as that of the baby yet to be born. Such women suffer and survive against many odds just for the sake of their children. Mere examples will not be enough to explain the pain they undergo and the degradation to which they are subjected.

Once married, the Muslim woman could go out to visit her relatives. What happens if she has no relatives ? I have come across women from Bangla Desh suffering from intense loneliness in Patna. There is also, for example, a young woman of thirty-five from an Arab country. She is endowed with many natural gifts — but has no children ! Since her husband wishes her to observe strict Purdah, as she is an Arab, she is forbidden to go out visiting or to entertain others. Throughout the day she has to be content with tending the goats she is allowed to bring up and, at times, even has to wait for many hours simply to drink water. Yes, even to fetch some water from the pipe next door she has to depend on her husband who leaves the house early in the morning and returns only at night. Arabia is too far to go in order to pour out her grief to her mother or to her sisters.

There are women who frequently go out to pay visits or to attend functions. I meet them in the street clad in 'burqa' and aiming straight for their destination. Often I have had the opportunity to be with them during a wedding or a feast. It is striking to note that the women make all the preparations, but they do not participate in the ceremony itself. They keep to their corner and continue to be of service from behind the curtain.

Women who go out without wearing their 'burqa' are severely criticized. Very often poor women who are unable to afford to have a 'burqa' dare to defy the tradition. Many from the lower-middle income group, however, struggle to keep their propriety by waiting in the hope of having one in the future. I cannot but recall a very sad incident in this context. A Muslim woman happened to lend her 'burqa' to her sister in-law. During the day she noticed that her two little children were missing from her house. Though she felt anxious, she could not go out to look for them, for she had been deprived of her 'burqa'. She had to wait till a man appeared on the scene. By that time it was too late. Both children had been playing near the Ganges and had accidentally drowned. Unable to forgive herself she became mad.

I could go on with many more examples, but I think it is clear that many of the disabilities suffered by Muslim women are due to this 'Purdah' system, the essence of which is the social separation of the sexes. Prolonged living in unhealthy houses — or mere rooms — coupled with a lack of fresh air and sunshine, as well as insufficient food, all combine to make Muslim women frequent victims of anaemia, T.B. and osteomalacia. Also, most of them give birth to many children. They are aware of the consequences if they become sick: their husbands may take other women, and their children would roam around uncared

for. They need money as well as the company of their menfolk to go to a hospital in time. In most cases they lack both, and continue to suffer with an heroic endurance.

Another predominant fear present in their lives is the fear of being exploited and used as possible objects of revenge during communal riots. A woman social worker participating in relief work in a riot-hit area reported that it would not be possible to remove such fear from the minds of the growing young girls for they have been terrorized for life. Another lady who escaped from being killed hardly ever gets out — she seems to be paralysed with an unspoken fear. In her case 'Purdah' has not been imposed on her by her religion alone but also by others outside her religion. These others find it hard to believe that it is possible to be a good Muslim and also a good Indian.

The few upper-middle income group women whom I have been visiting seem to be in a better position. The fact that they could have a college education and become economically independent gives them the security and courage to break away from some of the old customs. They are aware of the plight of their poorer sisters. They express a desire to be of some help in emancipating them, yet they are faced with the obstacle of being branded as rebels and outcasts, for the men do not approve of such liberty. Once a married woman, educated in law, in London, volunteered to help us in making a survey. In many houses the men, as well as the women, spoke to me, but they acted in a strangely ambiguous manner towards her. Later on they expressed their dislike in seeing a Muslim woman freely meeting men in such a fashion. College boys can conduct classes for the weaker boys as voluntary social workers, but college girls are not allowed to entertain such thoughts. Thus the Purdah system, while curtailing the liberty of the poorer Muslim women, also conveniently paralyses every good impulse on the part of the well-to-do, educated Muslim women.

One could reasonably expect that at least their poor economic condition would be of some concern to their religious or political leaders. It is sad to note that such leaders are busy with seemingly more important matters, normally the religious identity of Muslims! The religious instruction given by them unfailingly filters down to the Muslim women. It serves as an adequate antidote to the insecurity they feel. The Muslim woman's desire to become free is replaced by a created desire to prove that she is different from her Hindu sisters. Deep down she resents wearing the 'burqa', yet now there is a superficial eagerness to do so. Thus she is exhorted to strengthen her identity as a Muslim woman, while the basic problem seems to be the need of having an identity even as a human being.

What Can We Do ?

As Christian women, we can no longer afford to be aloof and untouched by the problems of Muslim women. Women religious in particular have several assets, including education and personnel. The one thing we seem to lack is adequate motivation. Are we not able to see in the above-mentioned sufferings the injustices involved ? Are we not invited by Christ and by the Church to fight against everything that alienates human beings from one another ? Is it not demanded of us to have a deep respect and genuine love for those people who, in general, are totally disrespected by those in authority ? How long will we continue deliberating on their situation as hopeless or not hopeless ? In fact, their helplessness all the more challenges us to take up their cause.

The statement issued after the consultation on Christian Presence among Muslims in Asia, held in Varanasi, November 26-December 4, 1983, says:

> We recommended that the local churches study the existing problems of women in general, especially those of Muslim women, so that christian women may learn to be more sensitive to them and constructive in their ways of approaching them. We urge that christion women be formed for this important task.

I should like to lay stress on the need for a twofold formation, one for all Christian women, another for training at least a few sisters especially for this ministry. This formation can be aimed at creating and deepening proper attitudes and to equip us with the required tools. Some of the desired attitudes are:

1 To become aware of the prejudices we have towards Muslims. These prejudices are very real and cloak a latent superiority complex which affects our way of thinking and the manner in which we behave

2. To become aware of the basic repugnance that arises within us whenever we sense Muslims are unconsciously forcing sets of values and behaviour patterns on us which are different from our own.

3. To become aware of the need to feel with the suffering women, not merely remain uncomfortable outside observers.

4. To become aware of the need to cultivate a humble and learning attitude of mind in order to enter, with due respect, into a new world.

5. To be ready to take risks in solidarity with them as an act of faith that such action, involving personal sacrifice, is our contribution towards a better future for them.

While the above-mentioned attitudes can help us to have a relevant social understanding, the tools mentioned below will help us to have an involvement which is genuinely constructive. The language of the people is an indispensable pre-requisite, as is a commitment to dialogue. Also needed are a basic knowledge of Islam and of its spiritual heritage, especially here in India, and some experiential knowledge of their background. Equipped with all these, a Christian woman can have a meaningful ministry among Muslim women, be she a counsellor, doctor, nurse, teacher or social worker by profession. There is no doubt regarding the welcome they would receive, for Muslim women seek friends to listen to them, doctors and nurses to take care of their neglected health, teachers to teach them enough to be able to write a letter to their mothers and others, and social workers to help improve their living conditions.

The greatest challenge to Christian women, particularly to religious, is to explore appropriate ways to come to a deeper communion with the Muslim women of the locality in which they live. It is evident, then, that there is a great need for setting aside personnel, trained to respond, in collaboration with Muslim women, to their varied, self-expressed needs and aspirations. Undoubtedly such people will have the privilege of participating in building up God's kingdom of justice and freedom where so much oppression now reigns.

Guru-Priest

Becoming an Indian Guru-Priest. By Fr Joseph CASTELLINO *Shillong, Vendrame Missiological Institute,* 1982. Pp xii-114 Rs 15. (Available from Asian Trading Corporation, Bombay).

This study, originally presented as as a thesis at the East Asian Pastoral Institute, Manila, inquires on "how and why should a priest in India be both a spiritual guru and an active servant of the people, according to Indian Christian authors, 1968-1978" (p. 4). It collects, classifies and repeats the views and suggestions of about 60 theologians from India, besides some anonymous documents, usefully listed in the bibliography. The book does not attempt to do a critique of these writings or to present a deeper synthesis. The author is aware of the difficulty in integrating the "servant role" and the "guru role", but thinks with many of the authors presented that it should be done, and that "the age-old problem of interiority and exteriority" can be solved by a reference to "a third dimension, the Kingdom of God" (p. 96) One is struck by the amount of reflection on the priesthood and ministry that has come out from India in ten years. One also feels the lack of a deeper study of the Indian theology of the guru, and of the temptations of guruism. I think that at times the role of the guru is easily taken to represent that of a priest in Hinduism, which it is not. The view attributed to Fr Mattam on p. 74 is not his but that of Dr Cuttat, whom he studies

The book is a useful summary of Indian thinking on the subject around and after the time of the national Seminar.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Forum

Evangelization and Baptism

It is a pleasant revelation for ageing and retired missionaries to hear younger priests in the missions, like Sevanand (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, December 1983), asking pertinent questions about the very fundamentals of "evangelisation" and their own role as missionaries in the villages of Independent India. Time was when nobody even dreamt of asking such startling questions as, probably, nobody seriously doubted what evangelisation is all about.

To the missionaries of pre-Independent India the principles of evangelisation were all clear: Jesus Christ, the God-man, had brought salvation to sinful man by his sufferings and death Man had only to make this salvation his own by accepting Jesus as his Saviour through the rite of baptism which would wash away his sins and make him a "child of God", with the right of inheritance to heaven, the "kingdom of God" . Fired therefore by the proverbial "missionary zeal" for the unbaptised "pagans" and, no doubt, with the best of goodwill, the missionaries took endless trouble to bring as many people as possible to the baptismal font in order to wash them of their sins and put them on the safe path to heaven.

I happen to be one of those well-intentioned missionaries — in his seventies now who worked for several years in the North of India, mostly in Uttar Pradesh and for a while in Madhya Pradesh, as well as for years in the South, in Tamilnadu, motivated by the same missionary ideas of the time. It hardly occurred to me in those days to question the basic motivations of missionary activity. But today, while, having retired from the active ministry, I look back, I am appalled at the simplistic understanding of the meaning of evangelisation that spurred me to spend a life-time as a missionary 'ad paganos'!

Anyone familiar with Indian society knows that there are basic beliefs that all Indians hold in common and staunchly adhere to, irrespective of their being learned or unlearned, rich or poor, townsfolk or villagers, as indeed all of them share the same cultural background. One of the religious ideas that they all hold is that all religions lead to the same end, God, the Infinite Being, just as all rivers, after their long and tortuous journey through hills, valleys and forests, finally reach the vast ocean into which they empty themselves and with which they merge. This has been a wide-spread popular idea in India from time immemorial. In modern jargon we call it pluralism of religions. When we pause to think of it, this age-old Indian stance seems to contain a mine of horse-sense and wisdom; it has made Indians known the world over for their spirit of tolerance and understanding born of deep human wisdom. Is it not pertinent here to

recall that Vatican II expressed the same thought when it declared that the Spirit of God has been active all over the world, inspiring and enlightening all men of goodwill ? Didn't St Paul too say that the "Spirit blows where it will"? Indians are convinced that the Spirit of God has been active in India in Rishis and holy men and that God has been revealing himself to their ancestors from time immemorial, "in many and various ways", in the words of the Letter to the Hebrews. Indians, therefore, are rightly proud of the wealth of wisdom contained in their Sacred Scriptures, like the Upanishads, the Gita and others. Scholars the world over agree that they are a treasure-house of deep religious wisdom.

When therefore missionaries come to these Indian people, proud of their culture and rich with deep religious wisdom, to tell them that their religion is irrelevant and false and needs to be supplanted by a new one brought by them from the West and allegiance to which is necessary for salvation, Moksha, the people are not only skeptic but feel outraged and insulted by the insolence of the messengers of this new Western religion who belittle their own cherished ideas and pretend to be superior to them and to teach them religious wisdom ! The missionaries' claim that Moksha is the monopoly of the clients of their own brand of religion is laughed at as simplistic by the intelligent and violently opposed by the short-tempered who might even take up the cudgel to settle scores as happens occasionally in mission fields ! Whom to blame, the missionaries or the people ?

If the missionary, unable to grasp the people's attitudes and unwilling to admit defeat, goes ahead on the sly to make proselytes among the less intelligent, the illiterate and the economically backward sections of the people who often struggle to make both ends meet, if, moreover, he tries to "convert" them by covert or overt enticements, then he is bound to stir up a hornest's nest and bring odium and hatred on himself as a trouble-maker and subversive — which probably he is, unwittingly though ! He becomes a sower of discord and dissention in the village by introducing in its midst a new foreign "sect", as the people see it ! At a time when India, like other new independent nations, is very conscious of its identity and newly found freedom from colonialism, people's reaction to the preacher of a new religion is bound to be defiant. This new foreign religion and its preachers tend to become abhorrent and repulsive to Indians, as is amply evident from events in many parts of the country !

Are the Indian people to be blamed for their skepticism and caution towards Christianity ? I would say, *no*. *If Indians refuse* to become "converts" to Christianity by undergoing the ritual of baptism and by adopting new names, often foreign, there seems to be no fault on their part. The fault lies squarely with the evangelisers who seem to have misunderstood the basic meaning of evangelisation as contained in the Gospels, though, probably, due to no conscious fault of theirs. We have taken it for granted that evangelisation meant "baptising" people, as also submitting them to a "system of laws", prohibitions and prescriptions enacted in a foreign country in colonial times. Historically, evangelisation came to India as part

of the colonial movement from the West. That the missionaries came with the conquering colonial powers and have been identified with them is part of history.

Sevanand's doubts and queries are today on the minds and mouths of many thinking priests in the missions who often say they have "nothing to do" ! The same questions are also on the minds of a good many old ones like myself who in retirement begin to question the validity of their past missionary motivations. As a retired missionary who in his seventies is on the last leg of his pilgrimage, I might deem it a service to Indian missionary effort to make known to my younger confreres in the missions my candid views on the subject of evangelisation, garnered as these are through fifty years of contact with the Indian people in villages and in towns as well.

I am still asking the same questions that Sevanand does and am still in search for answers As of today, evangelisation to me is nothing else but "spreading Jesus' message of love among men", a message based on God's Fatherhood and, consequently, on the Brotherhood of all men When this basic message takes hold of society, justice which is only its corrollary will follow suit, like fish follow water. With justice will come freedom and equality, respect for the individual and what we call today his "human rights". Unhealthy and avaritious competition based on selfishness and greed will dwindle and the desire to share with others the wealth of mother Earth will become spontaneous. Compassion, mercy and understanding will increase and this will bring happiness, peace and joy among men, as foretold and desired by Jesus. We read that the first Christian community in Jerusalem was known for their love for one another and their readiness to share everything, so that nobody among them was in want. All lived together in fraternal love and understanding and enjoyed the resultant peace and joy

If therefore evangelisation is understood as the "diffusion of Jesus' message of love", then there is no reason why those who accept this "message", this "good news" should be "baptised" and made members of a new "Church", thus being affiliated to an "institution" which in fact only tends to make of them a new "caste" with its own caste symbols and to isolate them from their own social environment, instead of serving as a sign of identification with that environment. I would go further and say that it is unwise to group together into a new "sect" those who accept the "message of love" and to isolate them from the mainstream of the village community, their own kith and kin, and make them "fish out of water". They should remain "themselves" and maintain their identity, instead of retreating into a new, exclusive, club or ghetto; thus they will be able to function as a vigorous new living force that infuses a new spirit into the men and women they come into contact with in their daily intercourse, and serves as a "leaven" to recreate the society of which they form part and parcel. They needn't even have an exclusive place of worship called "church" with its foreign look and paraphernalia. (The early Christians worshipped in the Jewish synagogues.) They should preferably pray and worship with others of their village, but they will bring to their prayer

and worship a new dimension and meaning and transform it all into an expression of their newly found insights into God, their common Father in heaven. Their love for one another will be "sacramentally" expressed by their participation and sharing in a "community event", preferably a "community meal", without distinctions of caste and creed.

I am of the firm view that Sevanand's line of thinking is the correct Christian one and that his doubts and queries are pertinent and relevant. By presenting the person of Jesus and his teachings as model for an honest human life, he has discharged commendably his duty of evangelising the people. Through his "satsang", as he tells us, he has achieved a "change of heart", that is, true "conversion" to Christ and his ideals, the goal of all evangelisation. His confreres remain skeptic, but they will come to realise, in the course of time, that the path he is treading is the right one — though it may take a lot of time before that happens. Established traditions, even when they are patently questionable, don't just disappear overnight as is evidenced by the strong opposition far-sighted men like de Nobili had to face from superiors and confreres in their days Opposition itself may have happy results, as it helps to make the problem clear by viewing it from every side. I would say that Sevanand has no reason to scruple about not having "baptised" anyone with the 'water' of baptism which is only a symbol of the baptism "in spirit and truth". *I would go further and maintain that in our Indian religious context*, to "baptise" people, give them new names and alienate them from their own milieu, is an imprudent step, nay more, a disservice to Christ and Christianity. For Jesus came not to establish a new religion to separate man from man but to bring all religions and peoples together into a world-family of brothers and sisters living happily together, inspite of inevitable differences of points of views in their grasp of the Infinite Being we call God. These differences not withstanding, all men would agree on one point, i.e., that the Infinite is "love supreme" and that man's love for him must necessarily find its visible expression in his love for his brethren. Jesus' entire teaching is contained, in a nut shell, in that short *mantra*: "Love God with all your heart and love your neighbour as yourself." Announcing this is true evangelisation and nothing else — so it seems to me at this stage in my life.

During my working years as a missionary in various regions of India, I have found that the Indian people, of whatever hue, readily accept the person of Jesus and his teachings when presented to them in the way mentioned above. They admire, love and worship him. Swami Vivekananda, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Keshub Chandra Sen, Mahatma Gandhi and so many other great and intelligent Indians of recent times are all examples of it. But they would definitely reject "Christianity", if presented as a new "religion" that imposes on them a new life-style, different from theirs, and requires their being affiliated to a "Church" of foreign origin which imposes on them a thousand and one rules and regulations, alien to their culture and social set-up.

One would therefore wish that more and more Indian priests pick up courage and follow in the footsteps of Sevanand to fulfil the injunction given them by their "guru" to "go and teach the world" and bring all men to the "path of love" that brings happiness here below and hereafter. Doing this, the missionary fulfils his "mission of evangelisation".

St Thomas Hospital
Chetpet-Polur P O
North Arcot Dt
Tamil Nadu 606801

Fr Angelo DEVADASS
Chaplain

Essays in Evangelical Social Ethics. Edited by David F WRIGHT *Exeter, Paternoster Press*, 1978 Pp 192 £ 4 20

The book is a collection of papers read at a symposium held at High Leigh Conference Centre at Hoddesdon in U K. The symposium was the first national effort on the part of evangelicals in Britain to move into the area of social ethics, making up for the neglect in the first half of the century Evangelical ethics have for quite a long period been content with a personal rather than a social approach Evangelical protestantism had adopted an individualist outlook and believed that great social problems can be solved if only we have individually consecrated persons to face them (p 9) The discovery of the Church in evangelical teaching, the theme of the kingdom inaugurated in the signs of feeding the hungry and gathering in the flotsam and jetsam of humanity, have contributed to arousing a new social concern as part of the evangelical task

Oliver O'Donovan examines nature, the God-given natural order, as a basis for ethics and compares it with the ethical import of historical revelation and eschatology. Howard Marshall discusses the biblical grounds for socio-political obligations together with the difficulties in the hermeneutical reading of Scriptures. John Briggs examines the agenda for *Christians in a pluralistic society* He shows clearly how Christians can ontribute to the human good of secular society from the resources of their faith and play the role of active citizens The symposium has an interesting chapter on the challenge of Marxism, by David Lyon He recognises the contribution of Marxism in its critique of religion, of capitalism, and in its approach to social analysis of a stratified society He discusses Marx's critique in terms of creation, fall, redemption and eschatology The chapters on "Man in Society" and "Human Rights" examine and articulate these issues in terms of the social tasks and ethics of evangelicals In an epilogue, John Stott sums up the tasks awaiting evangelicals in the area of social ethics

The symposium made a significant beginning in bringing into evangelical awareness a long-neglected dimension of Christian faith Evangelicals must be prepared to tread the conflict-ridden path of commitment to social justice The book marks "an evangelical conversion" (p. 14) To other Christians too it throws open the challenge of a praxis of social liberation inspired by the Gospel of Jesus.

S AROKIASAMY, S.J

Correspondence

Dear Editor,

I found the article of Sevanand, S J. in VIDYAJYOTI, December 1983, on Evangelisation well thought out. It invites reflection and discussion.

When reading it, I was reminded of the Conclusion in the article of Fr J. Neuner, S J, "Jesus the Prophet", which is excellent. I take from it the following points.

1) It is important when proclaiming the prophetic message of Christ that we do not remain at the level of liberation; but we must present Christ himself.

2) When introducing Christ to non-Christians, it is not good to begin by asserting his divinity; this would be inefficacious or misleading.

3) "Through the deepening perception of Jesus' message and demands", the way may be prepared for "a real conversion of mind, and so finally make it possible to come to real faith in Jesus Christ". As Fr Neuner says, this "ought to be the normal process of every Christian initiation".

As to Sevanand's practice, I consider it acceptable, as he gives the teaching of Christ and his values, and also introduces the person of Christ. He does not demand visible initiation through baptism. In the circumstances in which he works this would be impossible, the people being convinced Hindus, some of them Aryasamajists, etc.; or, if at all possible, it would be definitely imprudent, ineffective and misleading, as Fr Neuner points out. I have done myself this sort of evangelization, for instance when I volunteered one year to teach Moral Science in the top classes in a non-Christian High School.

But whenever it is possible, we ought to give the whole message of Christ. God could have chosen another way of salvation. But he chose the Incarnation of his Son, who established a Church, a visible Church, obviously with the intention that there be visible membership in that Church. The preaching of the apostles and of St Paul was intended to lead to baptism and visible membership in the Church. Would they adopt another policy now in our times? I do not think so. The reading of the Acts of the Apostles should convince us that the fear of opposition or of persecution should not normally keep us from preaching the mystery of the Gospel, as Christ intended us to do.

Also, although I would consider the way of evangelization of Sevanand as the best possible in his circumstances, I do not think that it should be adopted as a general policy. It seems to me utopic to expect that it will eventually lead many to the full Christian initiation. I would be happy if I was mistaken; but I think that a formal invitation from us to join the Church is required in many, if not in most cases. Vaman Narayan Tilak, a Marathi poet, said that, although he knew Christ through the Gospels, he did not become a Christian earlier, because no one had invited him to join the Church. We could mention other similar cases. Often, I think we are too timid.

Without reference to Sevanand's practice, but only referring to the timidity of many of us, I recall the words of St Paul: "Pray for me to be given an opportunity to open my mouth and speak without fear and give out the mystery of the Gospel of which I am an ambassador in chains; pray that in proclaiming it I may speak as boldly as I ought to" (Eph 6: 19-20).

Gnanmata Sadan,
Talasari P.O., 401606

Ramon NUBIOLA, S.J.

Dear Editor,

*Congratulations to Sevanand, S J. His article on "Evangelization" (*VIDYAJYOTI*, December 1983), was superb and very informative. His ambition to preach the Gospel of Christ where he has not yet been named, is something which every missionary should cherish While great theologians, especially in the northern missions discuss about "What is Evangelization?", Sevanand has decided to bring "Christ to the world".*

The IMS Study House,
1, Tashkent Road,
Allahabad, 211 001

Mahendra PAUL, I.M.S.

Dear Editor,

I was very impressed by the article on Evangelisation in your Forum of VIDYAJYOTI, December 1983. Certainly Sevanand seems to have found a way. Many of his questions would require far more thought than I, and space than you could give to them But I do hope that more of us missionaries will be inspired by his work to be real missionaries and not just builders or beggars or even development workers without any spiritual or evangelising content to the mission.

I am glad that Sevanand leaves the door open for possible entry into the institutional Church and of course I realise that owing to social reasons many cannot enter therein It is interesting that Christ commanded us to preach and to baptise but he did not command us to convert. We cannot convert Only God can, and that only if the person is willing and receptive, but we can and we should and we must preach by every means available Sevanand's means seem to be the best available, especially since they are most acceptable I trust more will be inspired to follow and imitate him and his method.

The Cathedral,
Ajmer, 305001
Rajasthan

R H. LESSER

Syro-Malabar Church

L'India di S. Tommaso. Ricerche Storiche sulla Chiesa Malabarica. By Giuseppe SOROE. *Bologna, Cooperativa Libraria Universitaria Editrice*, 1983. Pp. vii-167. L 10.000.

Most of the serious works dealing with the history of the Oriental Church in India are in English; there are less in Malayalam, still less in French and other languages.

The author of this work is, on the whole, well informed. His bibliography runs over six pages. The number of unpublished sources he made use of also witnesses to the serious work done in producing this history of the Syro-Malabar, or Chaldeo-Malabar, or Nazrani Christians of India.

However, the treatment covers only the Catholic section of the originally united Church. The Malankara Catholics are included in a final and short chapter.

The merit of the short survey of a long history is enhanced by a collection of original documents, all in Italian. These are selected so as to illustrate the most important points of the story, though, perhaps, some could have been replaced by more important ones. The author also provides his reader with a chronological table.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Book Reviews

Studies in Luke

Luke. A Challenge to Present Theology. By Eduard SCHWEIZER. *London, SPCK*, 1982. Pp. 103. £5 50.

The book reproduces the four 'Currie Lectures' which the author delivered at Austin Presbyterian Theology Seminary (1980). These are introduced, in this volume, by a chapter pointing out the human and the divine aspect of Jesus in Lk. The author tells us that in his scholarly research on the one hand he has met with harrassment by the problems of Christology for which Luke gives no answer, but on the other hand he detected how much Luke's approach helped him to find a new theological understanding of the Christ event. The chapter contains a good exposition of the historico-critical method and its limits. Two extremes are to be avoided, viz, either to exclude all historico-critical method, or to consider historico-critical research as the basis of faith. In the 'Currie Lectures' (chs 2-5 of this book) Schweizer tries to find his way between these two extremes.

The first lecture (ch. 2) serves as an introductory setting for the other three, giving a "very condensed and therefore by necessity simplifying sketch" (p. 13) of the development of "The Continental Background of Modern Theology" (British and American theologies are excluded, because the lecturer declares himself not sufficiently familiar with these theologies). The survey covers four periods: 1. from Harnack and Blumhardt to K. Barth and R. Bultmann; 2 the Bultmannians and Barthians; 3. Neopositivism and *Heilsgeschichte*; 4 modern approaches (Rahner, Moltmann, Kung, Schillebeeckx, Jüngel). For the understanding of God as a living and loving God, Schweizer suggests to "listen attentively to Luke, because I think that he contributes some thoughts which have not been taken seriously enough; nor have they been applied to our modern problems" (p. 26).

The next lectures examine:

1. the meaning of history and Salvation history, today (ch. 3). This chapter contains some fine analyses of various elements or aspects of history in general and their application to the N.T.

2. the way in which the crucified and risen Christ is present today (ch. 4). The death and resurrection of Christ are events which happened in a definite time and place, part of a contingent history; how, then, can we speak of these as the absolute event, relevant to people of all times and places? Various solutions are examined, v.g., *Heilsgeschichte*, orthodoxy, existential interpretation, etc. In the previous chapter history has been viewed as implying a reexperience. This aspect is taken up here. " .. if faith, by necessity, embraces the fullness of life, intellect and sentiment, will and action, heart and senses, then God's saving history must be open to being reexperienced Believing in Jesus Christ means, according to Luke, ... that the church ... will reexperience the love of God to the sinner, the strength of God given to the weak, . ." (p. 54f) Luke's varied stories tell us what experiences to expect when trusting in Jesus Christ.

3. Jesus Christ in word and sacrament (ch. 5). this section applies to the modern dialogue between Catholics and Protestants the previous insights into Luke's approach to the Gospel. This chapter first gives an interesting study about Luke's use of stories, as compared to Jesus' use of parables. Luke gives his reader no easy solutions to all the riddles presented by the stories, the reader must reflect and find his own answers. It is through his stories that the evangelist tries to make the reader see what are the activity and destiny of Jesus, and who he is. Against this background Schweizer notes that the Protestant concentration on the Word is its weakness since Luke has no kerygma, "in the sense of a fixed formula into which the whole truth could be pressed" (p. 65). For Luke the gospel is "an event, the living word of God, which may come to people in ever new and unexpected ways.... Nor does Luke possess a clear pattern of *Heilsgeschichte* or of a church order" (p. 65). Further, the concentration of a doctrine of justification which has merely to be accepted is far from the fullness of Luke's tradition of all the stories about Jesus,

Similarly, Schweizer sees in Luke a warning to an extreme Catholicism whose concentration on visible authority of the church is far from the unsystematic fullness in which, according to Luke, the Spirit makes Jesus Christ come to life in the church. As regards the Eucharist there is a danger in Protestantism, that the sacrament becomes a merely symbolic confirmation of what the Word has proclaimed, and so becomes irrelevant, while "the Catholic danger is a one-sided concentration on the elements and their transubstantiation or whatever takes its place in more modern Catholic dogmatics" (pp. 67-68). Schweizer visualizes a table fellowship which is 'vertically from above' as God's gracious gift, while being also a manifestation within our earthly situation of service to our fellow man, such as the life of Jesus was, deeds arising out of this common meal; this, however, cannot exclude doctrine, which we also need.

The book concludes with an additional chapter, complementary to the 'Currie Lectures', on God's presence in Jesus Christ as seen by Luke The chapter deals with 'the powerlessness of the almighty God', viz., his self-manifestation in the death of Jesus, in the Incarnation, the kenôsis of Phil 2 to which Luke's theology comes close "God is God in his being truly man" (p. 77) This aspect is illustrated from the parable of the lost son (Lk 15, 11-32). Luke is reluctant to give us any clear Christological statement or titles; nor does he give us any definite pneumatology His stories are means for the reader to find Christ, provided the reader shows an openness for God's coming through these stories or reports of Jesus' teaching.

Concluding his study Schweizer notes that the present generation "is no longer interested in our statements and dogmas and Christological titles. It... asks where this Jesus becomes reality". The living Jesus is sought in a "social engagement for underprivileged people, or in an individual experience of meditation, or in a charismatically moved group and its different gifts.... Just because they have no fixed image of who Jesus is, they are able to let themselves be surprised by him" (p. 92). Luke often speaks of individual experiences, of joy and challenge, etc., granted to an individual disciple, and he sees this in the context of the church. Here, Schweizer notes, we detect the importance of dogmatic formulae and of confessional creeds. "We cannot do without our fellow disciples and their experiences throughout the centuries, from the New Testament times to ours" (p. 93).

These essays on Luke's theology and its meaning for modern basic theological questions are thoroughly readable. The first and last chapters have been written in the form of a lecture, matching thus with the central chapters. The reader finds here an excellent introduction to the mind of Luke and his presentation of the Good News, though Catholics may not always agree with the author's position. J. VOLCKAERT, S J.

Memorial in Paul

"Do This As My Memorial". By Fritz CHENDERLIN, S.J. *Rome, Biblical Institute Press*, 1982. (Analecta Biblica, 99). Pp. xii-320. L. 22 000.

The book is a doctoral dissertation defended at the Claremont Graduate School. As the subtitle indicates, the thesis deals with "The Semantic and Conceptual Background and Value of *Anamnêsis* in 1 Corinthians 11: 24-25". The study has five parts.

Part I, the introduction, exposes the text, thesis and method (ch 1); and the key figures in the debate (ch. 2) whose works date all from within the last thirty years. Among these authors attention is given mainly to J. Jeremias, D. Jones and H. Conzelmann.

Part II considers some probable key qualities of the Pauline world view, hermeneutics, and theology. Four conceptual areas are explored: interpretation, history, time-space, sacramentalism.

Part III examines the material available to Paul: the OT, OT apocrypha, pseudepigrapha, Qumran, and the NT. A special chapter is devoted to the typical Greek view: importance and functions of the gods, communication with the gods, and memorial. The chapter concludes with some thoughts on the Hebrew preponderance: though the idea of reminding God was very weak in the traditional Greek cult, "the LXX has shown that the use of Greek language did not of itself dissuade people from using reminding-God language in abundance" (p. 147 §299).

Part IV explores the Pauline context of the expression "in remembrance of me" (1 Cor 11, 24f), more particularly the (adjective) possessive pronoun *emên* (=my). This exploration leads to the conclusion (which is the thesis) that the term *anamnêsis* (remembrance) may not be deprived from either the subjective or

objective sense it can and does have: 'reminder-man'/'reminder-God'. This, however, does not suffice. "The translation 'memorial' seems indicated; and, *just as important*, this term must be explained, where the text is being explained, so as to show these wider possibilities that would have been evident to Paul himself and to so many first century readers" (p. 225 §467).

Part V gives "The *Sitz* in Scholarship". This part consists of two chapters: a survey of some of the main interpretations which question or overlook the meaning of *anamnēsis* as reminding God. The other chapter deals with "actualization of the new Covenant" by the celebrating Church. Actualization signifies "the process by which a part event is contemporized for a generation removed in time and space" (p. 254 §516), i.e., the process of making the past relevant Three aspects are considered: cultic, chronological and literary actualization. This section centers on the views of B. Childs and J. W. Groves.

The author draws our attention to the fact that the meaning of *anamnēsis* as a 'reminding-God' action and more specifically as 'memorial' was common in the OT tradition and in the early Christian *community, but that it soon disappeared* under the influence of Greek thinking. At the same time, as an alternative expression of 'Godward' orientation in the Eucharist we find in the liturgy of the Eucharist, the concept of sacrifice understood as identical with the Eucharist (not a mere reference to the cross). The Reformers knew only the 'reminding-man' dimension of the Pauline and Lukan texts. After the Reformers, "some modern Protestant Reformers" are mentioned, but nothing is said about the intermediary period. The study really starts with J. Jeremias. "Jeremias was not the first to suggest that 'reminding-God' is involved in the Eucharist *anamnēsis*, but he was the first to bring to the fore the wide extent of evidence or reminding-God, the only real debate on the subject has revolved around his work" (p. 4 §9). The study, therefore, is limited to the period of ca 1955-1980 Hence the bibliography also is practically limited to works of that period. A further limitation in the bibliography is due to the fact that only "works quoted or referred to by name" are given.

It is interesting for a professor to see that his teaching has not been wholly fruitless. During his theology Fr Chenderlin has heard an interpretation of 1 Cor 11, 24f identical to the one he defends in his thesis, except the 'reminding-man' orientation, and of course, the scholarly dress and the erudition displayed in the thesis. Forty years ago I naively thought I discovered a meaning of *anamnēsis* as God-ward action, a meaning not found in translations. Yet, further search soon revealed that ten years earlier J. Coppens in his article on the Eucharist, published in the *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément* II (1934), col. 1146-1215, already mentioned authors defending that interpretation. I regret that this lengthy study of Coppens does not appear in the bibliography, as it examines several topics studied in the present thesis: v.g., rationalist hypotheses about the origins of the Eucharist; Jewish and pagan analogies; mystery religions; pagan sacred meals; Eucharist and magic.

I wonder whether not more significance could have been given to Paul's reference to the Church's tradition based upon the Lord's authority (v. 23), a tradition common to all the churches, which includes also the formula of institution which therefore will not be Paul's own. This fact might dispense with the need of giving much consideration to the influence of, or the analogies with other contemporary religions, or the study of *literature* available to Paul and his readers (Part III-IV)

I regret that, perhaps unavoidably in the circumstances, the Deutero-canonical books are not treated according to the Catholic canon, but are classified simply, together with apocrypha such as Enoch, Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, Sybilline Books, etc. In Wisd 16, 6 we find an interesting use of *anamnēsis* (p 126 §259 where, however, the reference should read 16, 6 instead of 12, 2). The text is dismissed with the remark that the *anamnesis* "refers to God's chastisement serving as a reminder to man of having sinned against God's law". The meaning might be understood differently in its own context if one takes into account that the law in the OT occurs also with the connotation of God's promise of life (basic text Dt 31, 15ff), v.g., in Ps 119 (which will be taken as a psalm of petition). The bronze serpent as explained ('for') in v. 7, 'symbol of salvation', reminds God, the saviour of all, of his promise of life for those who observe the law. As such, *anamnēsis* in Wisd 16, 6 is a 'reminding-God' text next to Lev 24, 7 and Num 10, 10.

The book reflects painstaking study and research of a topic which deserves to be better known. The customary excellent presentation of the book in the

Analecta Biblica series unfortunately *is somewhat disfigured by a number of misprints.* *J. Volckaert, S.J.*

A New Theological Series

The Messianic Secret. Edited by Christopher Tuckett. (Issues in Religion and Theology, 1) *London, SPCK/Philadelphia, Fortress Press,* 1983. Pp. xii-148. £ 3.50.

Visionaries and Their Apocalypses. Edited by Paul D. Hanson. (Issues in Religion and Tehology, 2). *London, SPCK/Philadelphia, Fortress Press,* 1983. Pp. xiv-162. £ 3 50

The Interpretation of Matthew. Edited by Graham Stanton. (Issues in Religion and Theology, 3) *London, SPCK/Philadelphia, Fortress Press,* 1983. Pp. xii-164. £ 3 50.

Theodicy in the Old Testament. Edited by James L. Crenshaw (Issues in Religion and Theology, 4). *London, SPCK/Philadelphia, Fortress Press,* 1983. Pp. xii-163. £ 3 50.

"The 'Issues in Religion and Theology' series intends to encompass a variety of topics within the general disciplines of religion and theological studies. Subjects are drawn from any of the component fields, such as biblical studies, systematic theology, ethics, history of Christian thought, and history of religion The issues have all proved to be highly significant for their respective areas, and they are of similar interest to students, teachers, clergy, and general readers

"The series aims to address these issues by collecting and reproducing key studies, all previously published, which have contributed significantly to our present understandings" (p. ix)

1. Chr. Tuckett's introduction to the volume on the Messianic Secret gives a condensed history of the research done in this area Though concise the essay succeeds in giving a good view of the various attempts at solving the question of the meaning and origin of 'the Messianic Secret' in Mark.

W. Wrede's study (1911), which remains classical, and A. Schweitzer's reaction to it are exposed in a more detailed analysis because of the influence both works have had upon successive opinions concerning Jesus' commands of secrecy, his awareness of his own Messianic identity, and the disciples' lack of understanding. Tuckett completes h summary of Wrede and Schweitzer b giving a brief survey of criticism a appreciation made by critics up to ou times.

The essays selected for this volume represent publications of the last ten years (1973-1983) about the purpose of Mk, the origin of the secret (tradition or redaction) and its contents or motives. H. Räisänen, reviewing a series of interpretations, makes his own a statement made by U Luz (1965): "The Messianic secret is still a mystery." He adds. "Whoever claims to know precisely what Mark was aiming at with his secrecy theory is probably over-reaching himself" (p 135).

2. The introduction to the volume on Apocalyptic Literature focusses on the relevance of Apocalyptic Literature today, the interpretation of apocalyptic writing in previous scholarship, and the new impetus in apocalyptic research.

At the beginning of this century apocalypticism was repudiated, but war and other calamities led to the rediscovery of a literature which had its origin in periods of crisis and persecution. Archaeological findings and textual discoveries related to ancient Israel in time and horizon, gave further impetus to apocalyptic research Recently theologians (Käsemann, Pannenberg, Moltmann) on their part have stressed the importance of apocalypticism for the study of the origin of Christianity and Christian theology.

The essays selected for this volume represent every significant point of view current today. a definition of apocalyptic, the characteristics of apocalyptic and the distinction between apocalyptic and prophecy or wisdom.

3. The volume on the interpretation of Matthew is introduced by an essay on "Matthew's Gospel: A New Storm Centre". In 1966 Luke-Acts was described as a storm centre in modern scholarship. Since 1965 discussion about Matthew has been on the increase even about issues long regarded as settled.

The basic essay of this volume is an essay by E. von Dobschütz (1928), "Matthew as Rabbi and Catechist", arguing that Mt's inclination towards stereotypes and formula quotations may reveal a rabbinical style or a catechetical interest. The catechetical aspect in the work of the converted rabbi appears especially in the many catchword compilations, doublets, etc. The motives put

forth by von Dobschütz are not always very convincing; some of his conclusions are at present abandoned, though most of his observations are still widely accepted by critics. Stanton gives an excellent summary analysis of the essays reproduced in the volume, completing or correcting the authors' views, also referring to later developments on the same or related topics.

4 "The Shift from Theodicy to Anthropodicy", an essay by J. L. Crenshaw, introduces the volume on Theodicy in the Old Testament. The essay focusses on Israel's search for meaning in evil, suffering and death, questioning God's justice. Hence the attemps to bring together the concepts of creation and justice, or the emphasis on God as sustainer of kings and champion of widows and orphans (two theodicies, one for the oppressor, another for the oppressed). The greatest problem, however, was how to reconcile undeserved suffering with belief in order and purpose. The answer was sought in understanding suffering as retributive, disciplinary, revelational, probative, illusory, transitory or mysterious. Qoheleth for his part simply denies the *possibility of discovering any meaning* behind innocent suffering. The Exile particularly created a problem as it defied God's promises to Israel. The Deuteronomistic theology justified national setbacks and political oppression as divine punishment for sin and thus rescued God's sovereignty and freedom. At the same time there remained a tiny ray of hope, but the further the fulfilment of the hope was delayed, the more its credibility was likely to fade. One way out was to remove the hoped-for-event from the realm of experience into the realm of illusion, or into a hidden dimension in time or into the next world. Another way of justifying human suffering is to associate God with human suffering. The climax of the search for a solution is found in the Servant of Yahweh. Both human acquiescence and divine intention combine in the description of the faithful Servant.

"The essays chosen for reproduction in this volume introduce the reader to the scope of the dilemma ancient Israelites faced in coming to grips with phenomena that seemed to deny the force of the claim that justice prevailed on high" (p. 12).

The studies presented in this series are excellent initiations into religious or theological key topics. Advanced students may be happy to have some of the best studies on a subject collected into one volume.

J. VOLCKAERT, S J.

The Papacy at Vatican I

How the Pope Became Infallible. Pius IX and the Politics of Persuasion By August Bernhard HASLER. Introduction by Hans Küng. *New York, Doubleday*, 1981. Pp. xi-383. *London, Sheldon Press*, £ 15.

Hasler's book is focused on Vatican I, its *definition of papal infallibility* and the personality of Pope Pius IX. What is presented here in English translation is the second edition of the German work published in 1979. That single German volume was a summary and adaptation of the author's doctoral thesis inspired by his master, Dr H Küng, and published in 1977 Hasler died young in July 1980.

The one volume follows partly a chronological order, partly a subject-wise plan. The first chapter studies the historical background of the question. The other nine chapters deal with Vatican I, though only with the still debated constitution on papal authority: its preparation, the person of Pius IX and the role played by him, the freedom, or lack of the same, of the council members; the arguments used to back up the definition of infallibility, the ways and means through which that definition was finally obtained, the later impact of the definition, the ideological character of Vatican I; Pius IX again, infallibility and the Church today.

It ends with an open letter to the present pope, followed by texts related to controversial reviews of the original work in two volumes

The translation appears quite faithful, and the book in its present form reads almost like a novel. But is this not due partly to a certain passionate tone adopted by the author himself, particularly in making Pius IX not only the central figure but almost the villain of the play?

It cannot be denied that Hasler's treatment is based on painstaking research through published and unpublished sources found very dispersed. And it must be regretted that he was not granted access to the section of the Vatican archives which cover both the pontificate of Pius IX and Vatican I. This is all the more strange because it is known today that those archives are open for consultation until Pius's death in 1878.

Some critical remarks are called for. The title of the book is awkward. The pope as such is not infallible but his *magisterium*, i.e., his official teaching capacity under the very strict conditions laid down by the council. The author writes a work of history. Often, however, it turns into apologetics of the minority position which was defeated at Vatican I. The views of several members of that minority are given, what I would call, a slant. The private life and character of Pius, are treated so adversely as to defeat the very purpose of the author. The arguments he puts forward to suspect, if not to prove, that Pius IX had an illegitimate son are not convincing. They smack too much of court and diplomatic gossip (Rome always abounded in tittle-tattle) to be reliable. In that respect we may regret that so far no serious and reliable life of the controversial pope is available.

Hasler often speaks of an ideology at work in the doctrine of infallibity. As he understands it, the term refers to fashioning an a-priori position, to which facts, otherwise well founded, must be submitted, if not made to fit into. One could have expected him to study more deeply the evolution of ecclesiology in the Western Church. Was Vatican I really not free? This is still a debatable question. It seems fair to say that it enjoyed a restricted freedom. This means that freedom could have been greater, better defended, more emphasized; but it was not altogether lacking. The author minimizes the development in the West (since the 13th century) of a growing awareness of infallibility.

Hasler seems to want the Vatican I definition on papal infallibility either abrogated or at least considerably toned down. What is true in the present ecumenical context is that the papal ministry and authority needs to be *rethought* by the whole Church, with a view to deepening and re-interpreting the definition in the broader context of the life of the Church. Recently a leading Orthodox prelate, whose close relations with the Vatican are well-known, called in an interview for a Third Vatican Council, to do just that. This may well be the solution.

Hasler's work, though well documented, is clearly one-sided, and he has the courage to recognize it. The single volume edition tends to overemphasize the polemical aspects of the two-volume thesis. Be this as it may, it should be read with a critical eye and with openness. We may question the author's contention that history should be accepted as one of the chief criteria of true Church doctrine. Yet the ongoing ecumenical dialogue requires of the partners a readiness to reappraise many customary beliefs. To this Hasler's contribution is by no means little. It heightens our awareness that the ecumenical task requires of us the greatest regard for truth and honesty, as well as deep humility, as we are confronted with the real difficulties other Christians have about our traditional Catholic convictions. E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Liturgical Aids

The Jesus Option. Reflections on the Gospels for the C-Cycle. By Joseph G. DONDERS. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982. Pp. vi-314. $ 8.95.

The Peace of Jesus. Reflections on the Gospels for the A-Cycle. By Joseph G. DONDERS. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1983. Pp. viii-311. $ 9.95.

The author is a Dutch White Father, Professor in Philosophy at the University of Nairobi and Chaplain to the St Paul's Catholic Students Community at the same University. A previous book by him, *Jesus the Stranger* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1980, p. 348), contained sermons prepared with and by the congregation of the University Chapel This book, in which the teaching of Jesus was applied to life-situations today in the context of the Third world, specially of Africa, won him the National Religious Book award in Kenya for the year 1979

In the two volumes under review, Donders proposes reflections on the Gospels for Sundays and Feastdays of the A (mainly from Matthew) and C (mainly from Luke) liturgical cycles. The stage remains the same, the community being throughout the author of the reflections on the Gospel readings which it applies to concrete life. The centre too remains the same: it is Jesus himself, discovered as he was, who challenges us to follow him. "He should remain in the centre, and to take him in the centre is what we have tried to do" (C-Cycle, p. 2). "We have tried to see him in the concreteness of the misery and expectation of his people and his time and we discovered, again and again, that they are *our* misery, that they are *our* expectations, that *we* are that people, living in that, our time" (A-Cycle, p. 4).

Continued on p. 238; *See also p.* 255, 260 *and* 262.

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII JUNE-JULY 1984 No. 6

Editorial

The Editor Takes Leave

Last month's editorial paid tribute to Fr Joseph Putz who died in Delhi last February. Part of his outstanding achievement was his editorship of our review over a long period of thirty-three years. He shouldered the burden in 1940, soon after the review had been launched, and remained at the editorial desk till 1973. THE CLERGY MONTHLY owed entirely to him the high repute it acquired and maintained through the years. When Fr Putz handed over the editorship, I was first appointed assistant editor and later, in 1977, editor of the review — which in 1975 was renamed VIDYAJYOTI. With the present number I am laying down the office.

Seven or eleven years are a short term, compared to thirty-three years. Yet that is enough time for passing through experiences of various kinds many of which, in retrospect, evoke pleasant memories, some less pleasant ones. During my tenure of office I have pursued the review's previous policy, hoping to contribute to the post-Vatican II renewal of the Church in India along what seemed sound doctrinal and pastoral lines. To all those among the different sections of the Church who during this period have extended to the review their patronage, I wish to express my thanks. My thankful appreciation goes also to those, inside and outside the Vidyajyoti Faculty, who have helped me in my task by contributing material for publication. Their collaboration has been precious to me.

Partir, c'est mourir un peu, said the poet. While relinquishing the editorship of VIDYAJYOTI Journal and a 25-year teaching post at Vidyajyoti Institute, I am also leaving India where I have spent 35 years as a missionary, to take up a professorship on the Theological Faculty of the Gregorian University in Rome. This editorial offers me the opportunity to greet all those, bishops, priests, students and people, who over the years have extended to me their trust and friendship. While today I must say good-bye to them, I will treasure their good-will hereafter.

God at times leads us through crooked ways which it is not for us to fathom. Regrets over the human factors which determine our existence and sometimes change our destiny are no help. The right course is to trust a God who is Love..., and to step out in faith into the future. Farewell.

J. DUPUIS, S.J.

Pontificia Università Gregoriana,
4, Piazza della Pilotta,
00187 Roma

The Psalms: Another View

Subhash ANAND

IN his editorial for the November issue of VIDYAJYOTI, the editor has voiced some questions that have been bothering me for some years now, questions that have also been put to me by people who have come to me with their problems in prayer: "Can Christians still pray the Psalms today? And is the Church justified in continuing to give them a privileged place in her official prayer?"[1] Fr C. M. Cherian takes up these questions in his article,[2] and claims that were we to approach Jesus today and ask him to teach us to pray, he would answer: "Go to my school of the Psalms where I am always teaching you how to pray."[3] I wonder whether there are adequate scriptural and theological reasons to make such a claim!

The disciples of Jesus who asked him to teach them to pray were all Jews, and so I guess they were familiar with the Psalms for many years, possibly from their childhood. They were at home in the culture in which the Psalms originated. They shared the theological vision and the ethical perspectives of the Psalmist. The Jewish liturgy, of which the Psalms were a part, was their own liturgy. Yet, they still had to learn to pray! Their question may be understood in two ways. Either they were keen to advance in prayer, but then the question is badly formulated, or they were still novices, they still had to learn the rudiments of prayer. I am inclined to believe that their question has the latter meaning. In that case, after years of praying the Psalms, they have still to learn how to pray! If these Jews could not find in the Psalms a school for prayer I have serious doubts that Jesus would offer them to us, men of a different century, men of a different culture. Further, I am inclined to believe that there are some major differences in the theological and the ethical perspectives of the Psalmist and of the Christian. I think we need a more profound study of this question. This is all the more demanded because not only the individual but also the community "lives in the Spirit and is conformed to the Truth. *Being constantly led by the Spirit means being changed progressively*

1. VIDYAJYOTI, November 1983, p. 469.
2. C. M. CHERIAN, "Praying the Psalms", Ibid., pp. 470-483.
3. Ibid., p. 474.

into the image of Truth."[4] It is not only that we *progressively* become changed into the image of Truth, but we also *discover the Truth progressively.* We need to take more seriously the "fear expressed that the Psalms are outmoded, some even harmful in so far as they entertain unchristian feelings towards enemies."[5]

At the start I must warn the reader. I do not know Hebrew, and so the original Psalter is a closed book for me. I must also confess that I have not been a very keen student of the Old Testament. Thus I am more close to the average Catholic. Hence I will base myself on a translation which "attempts to represent the meaning of the Hebrew text as faithfully as possible, and at the same time convey something of the grace and beauty of the original poetry."[6] This translation, while being close to the ideas and expression of the original Psalter, also "seeks to express the meaning of the Hebrew text in words and forms accepted as standard by people everywhere who employ English as means of communication."[7]

The Prayer of Israel

We are given to understand that the idea of God the Jews had has gone through a progressive development. Three distinct stages seem to mark this development. Abraham was a monolatrist: he worshipped Yahweh as *his* god. There were other gods too, but between Yahweh and Abraham there was some sort of an exclusive relation. Some centuries later we have what may be called henotheism: there are many gods, but Yahweh is more powerful than all of them. Hence his people can defeat the people who worship other gods. It is only with the prophets that we have a view that can be called monotheism, but this is not the "monotheism which is evident in the NT".[8] We come across Psalms that presuppose monolatry or henotheism. No other god is as great as Yahweh (77, 13), not even his equal (89, 6), and so he must be feared more than the other gods (96, 4). Yahweh is "much greater than all the gods" (97, 9). Thus Yahweh is not the god of all, but of Israel. He is a tribal god !

That Yahweh is seen as a tribal god becomes clear from what he does. He does not hear the prayer of non-Israelites (18, 41). He provides a banquet for his chosen one in the sight of his adversaries

4. Ibid., p. 471. Emphasis mine.
5. Ibid., p. 469.
6. *The Psalms for Modern Man* (Bangalore, The Bible Society for India, 1979), preface (page not numbered).
7. Ibid.
8. J. L. McKenzie, *Dictionary of the Bible* (Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation, 1983), p. 548a.

(23, 5), "from which they are excluded, and on which they look with envy".[9] The king of Israel is under the special protection of Yahweh, and so both, the king and Yahweh, burn down all those who oppose Israel and even the children of the enemy will not be spared (21, 9-10). Yahweh drives out the nations so that his people may possess their land (44, 2-3). What would be the difference between such a Yahweh and a rich landlord who grabs the land of a poor man in order to give it to his son ? This Yahweh even volunteers to defeat the enemies of Israel, if only they listen to him (81, 14). A tribal god wants to exterminate the enemies of his people, but for once Israel behaves better than their god, only to be censured by the Psalmist (106, 34).[10]

A tribal god is very kind to those who accept him, but very cruel to the others. Against them his anger is quickly aroused (2, 11). He laughs at the others, making fun of them (59, 8). For the sake of his people he kills the first born of all the families of Egypt (78, 51), and this makes the Israelites exclaim: "His love is eternal" (136, 10). For the sake of his loved ones he drowns Pharaoh and his army (136, 15). To achieve his purpose he even puts hatred in the hearts of people (105, 25).[11]

Historians of religions distinguish between tribal, national and universal religions. The first two characterize a given tribe or nation, while universal religions do not limit themselves to any ethnic or geographical boundaries. People who follow a tribal religion have very little sympathy and understanding, if any, for the adherents of other religions. As the Psalmist sees god in a tribal perspective, it is not surprising that he is very intolerant of other nations and their religions. He prays that his god may bring them to judgement (9, 19-20). He thinks that the worship of the non-Israelites is futile, nay, it only brings them trouble (16, 4). He believes that the gods of others are only idols made by men (96, 5). They are absolutely useless because they can do nothing with their mouths, eyes, ears, noses, hands and feet. He even prays that all who make them may become like them (115, 4-8). As the gods of the nations are not real gods, those who follow them are not really religious, and as such never speak the truth (144, 8, 11). They will always remain in the

9. E. J. KISSANE, *The Book of Psalms*, Vol. I (Dublin, Browne and Nolan Ltd, 1953), p. 105.

10. A tribal understanding of God is found also in 35, 1-3; 47, 3-4; 60, 6-8; 72, 9; 76, 4-6; 78, 55; 80, 8; 83, 1-18; 105, 44; 108, 7-13; 111, 6; 118, 6; 135, 12; 136, 21-22.

11. Such an attitude of Yahweh towards others is found also in 105, 36; 110, 6; 135, 8-12.

dark because the god of the Israelites has not revealed his law to them (147, 19-20). The religion of the Israelites is very much linked up with the land given to them by their god. Only this land is holy, and hence outside this land they cannot sing the praise of their god (137, 4).[12]

The ethical ideas that emerge from a tribal mentality are bound to be very narrow. Since the god of the tribe is only their god, his love is very limited: it reaches out only to those who accept him as their god. He protects only those who love him, blesses only those who obey him (5, 11-12). He hates those who do not accept his law (11, 5), but is faithful to those who are faithful to him (18, 25). The Psalmist also prays that his god may continue in this policy (36, 10).[13] A tribal god wants to make sure that his followers stick to him. Those who honour him are blessed with land and prosperity (25, 12-13).[14]

This idea that a man who keeps the law is blessed on this earth, that he is like a tree planted by a flowing stream (1, 3), that he will have many children, wealth and long life (128, 1-4), and the idea that a man who does not keep the law is cursed by the Lord, and that this curse reveals itself here on earth, is intimately linked with the notion the Israelites had of life, death, and life after death. If "a large number of the Psalms are now widely regarded as preexilic",[15] and if "we find no certain trace of a clear belief in the resurrection of the dead before the 2nd century B.C.",[16] then one should not be surprised to find in the Psalms an ethical vision that is far from being perfect.

Eschatology has a bearing not only on our ethical thinking but also on the content of our prayer. The Psalmist prays that his god may rescue him from death, because that is for him the greatest tragedy. He even tries to bully his god, telling him that once he is in Sheol he will not think of him, of his god (6, 4-5). His god shows his love for him by not allowing him to go down to the world of Sheol (16, 10). Death is seen as a sign that his god has abandoned him (28, 1). Since there is no happiness after death, the Psalmist prays that his god may lengthen his life, thereby allowing him a little more of happiness (39, 12-13). If his god is to show his might this is possible only as long as his devotee is alive (88, 10).[17]

12. See also 68, 28-30; 79, 97, 7; 135, 15-18.
13. See also 37, 16-20; 125, 4; 145, 20.
14. See also 1, 3-4; 112, 3.
15. J. McKenzie, op. cit., p. 704a.
16. Ibid., p. 184b.
17. See also 30, 3-9; 49, 19; 90, 10; 102, 32-28; 103, 4; 115, 16-17; 147, 7.

In a tribal religion the adherents of a particular god have to show *their love to him by opposing all those who do not accept him.* The enemies of the god become the enemies of the devotee. We find this sort of mentality also in the Psalms. The Psalmist prays that his god may crush all those who do not observe his law (10, 15). He prays that they may evaporate away like water, be trodden under foot, be lifeless like a stillborn child (58, 6-9). The Psalmist wants that his god should be angry with all those who do not accept him (79, 6). He is a bit scandalized by the patience of his god with those who are against him (74, 4-11) He should wake up and dash their babies on a rock (137, 7-9)[18]

If the enemies of the god of the tribe are the enemies of the tribals, then the opposite is also true: the enemy of the tribe, and of the individuals belonging to that tribe is also the enemy of their god It is to be expected that their god will not rest in peace till they, the enemies, are put in their place. Hence the Psalmist prays that his god may defeat all his enemies (3, 7). His god should throw them out of his presence, since all those who are against him are also sinning against his god (5, 9-10). His god should not only punish his enemies, but also destroy their children (17, 13-14). When the tribal attacks his enemy, his god is with him, helping him to destroy them utterly (18, 37, 40) When he falls sick he prays that he may get well so that he may have strength to pay back his enemies (41, 10). In one instance we see a certain malicious wisdom: the Psalmist prays that his god may not completely destroy his enemies, but that they should suffer for a long time so that looking at them others may learn a lesson (59, 11), and make fun of them (64, 8). Even when god destroys his enemies, the Psalmist suggests to him that his dogs drink their blood (68, 22-23). His enemy should not be treated with justice, but a corrupt man should try him and declare him guilty, so that he may be put to death, his children may become orphans and his wife a widow, unpitied by anybody (109, 6-19). All this he hopes because his god loves him (143, 12).[19]

18. See also 12, 3; 31, 17-17, 53, 5; 94, 2; 104, 35; 119, 126; 120, 3-4; 125, 5, 129, 6; 139, 19, 146, 6.

19 See also 6, 10, 7, 6, 9, 3-6, 28, 4, 35, 5-8, 54, 5, 55, 15: 57, 7, 63, 9-10; 69, 22-28; 70, 2-3; 71, 12-13; 79, 10, 86, 17; 89, 48-51, 92, 11, 140, 9-11; 141, 6-7. Cherian takes Ps 3 to illustrate his thesis I quote the last two verses in the RSV translation which is closer to the Hebrew original·

Arise, O Lord !
  Deliver me, O my God '
For thou dost strike all my enemies on the cheek,
  Thou dost break the teeth of the wicked.
Deliverance belongs to the Lord,
  thy blessing be upon thy people.

As a Christian, when I pray that God may protect me from my enemies, I should also pray that he may enlighten them, and bring them to his saving love.

The devotee of a tribal god proves his belonging to that god by keeping his law, and that does give him a sense of self-righteousness. He is concious that he is not like other men who do not observe the law (5, 4-7), and because he is innocent he hopes to be judged favourably (7, 8). He expects god to hear his prayer because god has examined him and found him completely free from evil (17, 1-5), faultless and righteous (18, 20-22). As a proof of his innocence he washes his hands and approaches the altar (26, 1-7). When troubles overtake him he is surprised that his god should let him down in spite of his being innocent (44, 17-19). He promises his god that he will see to it that no ungodly man continues to live (101, 7-8), as he cannot tolerate him (101, 5), because looking at him fills him with disgust (119, 158), and his hatred for him is complete (139, 22)! When he is insulted by others he reminds them that he is the chosen one of the Lord, and this sounds like a threat, because the Lord hears him when he calls (4, 2-3).[20]

Jesus and His God

The God of Jesus is the one Father of all, giving rain and sunshine to saints and sinners alike (Mt 5, 45). He is a prodigal Father, waiting for his wayward son to return home (Lk 15, 20). He does not desire the death of a sinner, but that he be converted and live. He reveals his law to all men, and judges them according to their conscience (Rm 2, 12-16). The whole of creation is sacred to him, and there is no particular temple or city that is peculiarly dear to him (Jn 4, 21-23), and therefore "in every nation any one who fears him and does what is right is acceptable to him" (Acts 10, 35, RSV). This understanding of God gives a particular character to Christian ethics and prayer.

The Christian is called to love all, even his enemies (Mt 5, 43-44). It is this that makes him like his Father. Were he not to love and forgive his enemies his offering would not be acceptable (Mt 5, 23-24), nor would he receive forgiveness for his sins (Mt 6, 14-15). The Christian is expected to bless those who curse him and pray for those who abuse him (Lk 6, 28). This attitude to our enemies is one of the most basic demands of Christian life. It is not enough to forgive seven times, but we have to forgive seventy times seven (Mt 18, 22). It is true that like any other human being, the Christian too experiences anger, hatred, resentment, etc. It is important that he is aware of this and accepts himself. It may also happen that, at times, like the Psalmist, he may be inclined to pray: "O God, destroy all my enemies!" But this is a temptation, and were he to give in to it, he would not

20. See also 52, 8-9; 73, 28; 120, 5-7.

be a disciple of him who prayed: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Lk 23, 34).

The faith in life after death does give a special character to Christian prayer. Death is seen not as a tragedy, but as a passover, as the beginning of real life, life eternal. A Christian prays: "Come Lord Jesus, come" (Rev 22, 20). He knows that in the world he is a pilgrim. He knows that suffering and persecution will be his lot if he is faithful to his Lord. He does not necessarily expect prosperity in this world just because he is faithful. Particularly today, in a world of exploitation, injustice and dishonesty, the man who follows the Lord is very often the one who does not have all that the world can give. Today there are millions who do not have enough, even though many of them live an upright life. It is true, hope in life eternal can become an opium, and this we must avoid. But it is also true that today it is a risky business to be honest and truthful. Very often it is the man who does not keep the law, who is not concerned for others, that has plenty of wealth and a great deal of land. This being the case, the Psalms that pronounce a blessing on the man of virtue and promise him happiness in this world, a happiness that is visible in human well-being, are far from the actual reality of many of our contemporaries.

We must honestly admit that we Catholics in the past have harboured ideas about other religions that would be fully acceptable to the Psalmist. While we had our own statues, we have made fun of the statues, beliefs and practices of men of other faiths. We believed that other religions are the works of the devil and that all who follow them are doomed to hell.... But today we realize that, precisely because God is the one Father of all, he will not leave any of his children in the dark. Today we are prepared to admit that his grace has been leading his children through different religious traditions to communion with him. We believe that we can and must learn much from the many faiths of mankind. We accept that these religions have shaped great mystics and very saintly persons. Such thinking would be an abomination for the Psalmist. In saying this it is not my intention to condemn him. His prayer expresses his ideas of God. Our prayer springs from our ideas of God.

The Father of our Lord is not one among many gods whom we have chosen as our god. No! He is the one sovereign Lord and God of all creation, of all tribes, of all nations. It is he who chooses us, and even when we respond to him it is through his grace. Hence Jesus demands that we have a great humility, not only in prayer, but in all our life. He clearly tells us that a self-righteous man is not

heard by his Father (Lk 18, 9-14). We can make no claims on God even when we have done what was expected of us (Lk 17, 10). He can dispense his favours as he wishes, and we cannot demand more from him even when we think we have done more than others (Mt 20, 1-16).

The Word of God in the Life of the Church

From the analysis I have made of the Psalms and from what we know of Jesus and his Father, I find it difficult to believe that "through *each* Psalm Christ shows us the ideal of Godlikeness or Christlikeness to which he is calling us".[21] The reason why Cherian thinks so highly of the Psalms is that "it is Christ who has given us the Psalms. Except for him we would not be having the Psalms as part of our Scripture."[22] Hence we are now led to make some theological reflections that, we hope, will help in evaluating the role of the Psalms in the life of the Church. We can best do this by first examining how the New Testament sees the Old Testament.

We are told that "certain Psalms have been recognised in the history of Christian interpretation as having a special Messianic significance".[23] Granting this to be the case, we still need to see to what extent these can be seen as anticipating the mystery of Jesus. Among those mentioned by Cherian we have Pss 2, 45, and 72. In 2, 9, the king who typifies the Messiah will rule over the people with an iron hand and break them in pieces like a clay pot. Quite different is the picture we have of the Messiah in the song of the suffering servant: "a bruised reed he will not break, and a dimly burning wick he will not quench" (Is 42, 3). It is this latter picture that is more faithful to him who said: "Learn from me; for I am gentle and lowly in heart" (Mt 11, 29). In 45, 5 the king, typifying the Messiah, has arrows that will pierce the hearts of his enemies, while 72, 9 says that the enemies of the king will lie flat in the dust. These descriptions suit more the political version of the expected Messiah, an expectation that Jesus rejected.

The attitude of Jesus towards the Old Testament does not seem to be that of total acceptance. In the Sermon on the Mount, six times we have Jesus saying "You have heard that it was said...", quoting a text of the Old Testament, and then continuing "But I say to you..." (Mt 5, 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43). In the last two instances Jesus gives a teaching that is just the opposite of what was taught in the Old

21. C. M. CHERIAN, art. cit., p. 475.
22. Ibid., pp. 474-475.
23. Ibid., p. 482.

Testament text cited by him Thus he seems to be correcting the Old Testament. The Old Testament considered the Sabbath very holy. Its violation could result in a death penalty (Ex 31, 12-16). Jesus is accused of violating the Sabbath, and the Jews do want to stone him to death (Jn 5, 18). But Jesus tells them that man is not made for the Sabbath, but *the Sabbath is made for man* (Mk 2, 27).

The early Christians too do not seem to accept the Old Testament in its entirety. There is a group of vocal Jewish Christians who want to impose circumcision on the non-Jewish Christians. In the Old Testament circumcision was part of the covenant Yahweh made with Abraham. Without it one could not belong to the people of Yahweh (Gen 17, 9-14), and no uncircumcised person could participate in the Passover (Ex 12, 48). The insistence of the circumcision party brought about a crisis in the early Church. A council was convoked and it was decided not to demand circumcision, even though the circumcision party maintained that without it there was no salvation (Acts 15, 1-29). St Paul was so annoyed by the stubbornness of the circumcision party that he advised them to go the whole way and have themselves mutilated (Gal 5, 12).

Did Jesus himself pray the Psalms ? Some will argue that because he was a Jew he must have prayed them. However, with one exception (Mt 27, 46), all the recorded prayers of Jesus are addressed to his Father. Though one Psalm describes Yahweh as the father of the fatherless (68, 5), nowhere is Yahweh directly addressed as father by the Psalmist. Even with regard to Mt 27, 46, we are not sure whether Jesus is reciting the whole Psalm or is only using the first line to express his anguish — supposing that the quotation: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me ?" is really historical, and not part of the interpretation Matthew gives to the agony of Jesus. Mark simply says that Jesus gave a loud cry and then died, while Luke has the famous prayer of Jesus for forgiveness for his enemies. Granting that Jesus prayed the Psalms, the question does arise whether he prayed all of them.

Another instance where Jesus would have chanted the Psalms is the celebration of the Last Supper. Matthew tells us that after they had sung a hymn, they left the upper room (26, 30). The original expression *hymnesantes* does not necessarily mean that they sang a Psalm. If the Last Supper was the Passover meal then Jesus and his disciples would end it with the Hallel. Now scholars are not quite agreed whether the Last Supper was actually the Passover meal. Raymond Brown thinks that the chronology of John is more plausible, i.e., the Last Supper took place a day before the Passover, and that

it was "a meal that had Passover characteristics".[24] This means that the Last Supper did not fully have the same form as the Passover meal, at least not in all its details. Speaking of John 17, Brown indicates that the priestly prayer of Jesus, as John 17 is called, had a liturgical context, according to some, and that its role was "similar to that played by the hymn which Mark 14, 26 reports as having been sung at the end of the Last Supper."[25] One of the major themes of John is the replacement of Old Testament feasts, institutions, rites: the Eucharist replaces the manna, wine replaces the Jewish water for purification, etc. Now must we not say that the priestly prayer of Jesus in John 17 replaces the Hallel ?

The attitude of Jesus and of the early Church helps us to formulate some theological principles. We must distinguish between revelation and inspiration. Not everything that is in the inspired books is necessarily revealed. In the Constitution on Divine Revelation, the Second Vatican Council states:

> Now the books of the Old Testament, in accordance with *the state of mankind before the time of salvation established by Christ*, *reveal to all men* the knowledge of God and of man and the ways in which God, just and merciful, deals with men. These books, *though they also contain some things which are incomplete and temporary*, nevertheless show us true divine pedagogy.[26]

Two points need to be noticed here: First, the Council makes a clear distinction between the two stages in salvation history, before and after Jesus; second, the Council clearly states that certain things in the Old Testament are temporary. God is a wonderful teacher. When he reveals his mystery he does so gradually, so that man can progressively come to know the Truth. This principle is implied in the question put by the writer of the Letter to the Hebrews: "If perfection had been attainable through the Levitical priesthood, what further need would there have been for another priest to arise...?" (7, 11). Similarly we can ask: "If the Psalms could serve as a school of prayer for the disciples of Jesus, what need was there for Jesus to teach them the Our Father ? There is thus, in the history of salvation, a gradual development of man's awareness of the divine mystery. His prayer too goes through a corresponding development. Hence prayers uttered in one stage of development may not be suitable for another stage.

---

24. R. BROWN, *The Gospel according to John*, Vol. II (London, Geoffrey Chapman, 1972), p. 556.
25. Ibid., p. 745.
26. *Dei Verbum*, n. 15 (English translation: *The Documents of Vatican II*, New Delhi, St Paul's Publications, 1966, p. 114). Emphasis mine.

The Prayer of the New Israel

The Church no doubt uses the Old Testament in her liturgy, but not in its totality From the Book of Leviticus, which has twenty-seven chapters, some parts of only four chapters are read at Mass in the whole year ! Similarly, over half of the Book of Numbers and of the Book of Deuteronomy is left out. Other examples could be given This means that just because a text belongs to the Old Testament it does not automatically become fit for Christian prayer. Must we not re-interpret the Old Testament to bring out its meaning for modern man ? Sure ! But we should not confuse hermeneutics with *eisegesis*. In interpreting the sacred text we cannot read into it our meaning This is not interpretation but distortion.

But should we not make a distinction between the Psalms and the other books of the Old Testament ? Granting this distinction, one must note that in the revised Divine Office some Psalms are completely left out, while quite a few others are used only partly. Here again the Church has implicitly accepted that just because a text is a Psalm it does not necessarily become fit for Christian prayer. According to my counting, I would have problems with over ninety psalms. Should we not see a spiritual meaning in them, going beyond their original worlds ? As I said earlier on, we must not confuse our *eisegesis* with authentic hermeneutics. Further, when we pray we should say what we mean and mean what we say, otherwise we would be heaping up empty phrases — something which Jesus does not want (Mt 6, 7). To use a formula even when its literary meaning goes against one's religious conviction is to sin against the hermeneutical norm given by Jesus: *The Sabbath is for man.* So too, it is not man that is for the Scripture, but *the Scripture is for man.* The attitude that treats given formulae as meaningful for ever, thus absolutizing them, is one of the temptations which Christianity has to examine openly if it is to be meaningful to contemporary man. We can no longer afford to forget that *liturgy too is for man*, and not man for liturgy.

One last objection remains: The Psalms have been part of the prayer of the Church for centuries ! Yes, this is true. But we must also admit that the Church is within a historical process, that she too gradually discovers herself. There was a time when Christians believed that anybody who through baptism did not belong to the visible Church was doomed to hell: *extra ecclesiam nulla salus* ! The Second Vatican Council made a very clear and bold statement: The Church regards with reverence other faiths because they too have

at least a ray of the Truth,[27] and through them God leads men to himself.[28] So too, in her prayer and liturgy, the Church experiences an ongoing growth, thanks to the presence of the Spirit within her. To resist this growth in the name of fidelity would be a sin against the Spirit. The Council makes a distinction between the immutable and the mutable parts of the liturgy. The latter can and must change.[29] Now it has to be proved that the Psalms belong to the immutable part of the liturgy. In the early Church we must distinguish the really Christian elements that form the Church, and the factual presence of those elements that actually belong to the Synagogue.

One of the principles guiding the Council in its concern for reform within the liturgy is to minimize impositions and foster greater plurality.[30] Plurality presupposes freedom. We see clearly in the New Testament that the first disciples of Jesus used their freedom. The Lord's Prayer in Matthew, besides a solemn liturgical opening, has seven petitions, while in Luke it has a very simple opening — just one word, and only five petitions. The original in Matthew has fifty-six words, while in Luke only thirty-eight words. The early Christians were not concerned about the *ipsissima verba* of Jesus. They were more concerned about the actual audience they were addressing. The way the two Gospel writers continue after recording the Lord's Prayer also makes it clear that they had a different theological concern. Luke wants to explain the goodness of the heavely Father, while Matthew insists on the need we have to forgive our brother. This freedom is one of the greatest gifts a Christian has and he should not surrender it except when love demands it (Gal 5, 1, 13).

The Psalms as Scripture

Some of my friends who find the Psalms very helpful may be a bit upset with what I have written. I admit that I find some Psalms very beautiful. I appreciate the great concern the Psalmist has for the poor and the oppressed. I can and do pray some of the Psalms. But all this may not satisfy my friends. Does the Psalter as a whole not have a value as it is part of the inspired word of God ? I believe it does. It teaches me that: a) the Israelites were a deeply prayerful community; b) for their community prayer they used formulae that expressed their faith; c) most of these formulae were composed within their history, as they grew in their understanding of Yahweh, as they struggled to be faithful to him, as they encountered the other nations

27. *Nostra Aetate*, n. 2.
28. *Ad Gentes*, n. 3.
29. *Sacrosanctum Concilium* n. 21.
30. Ibid., n. 37.

with their faiths; d) some of these formulae were, in spite of the narrow ideas the Israelites had of other nations, but under the guidance of the Spirit, taken from the religious traditions of other nations.[31]

The Psalter teaches me that: a) the Church must be a deeply prayerful community; b) for her community prayer she must use *formulae that express her faith*; c) these formulae should be the fruit of her history, of her experience of the Father of our Lord Jesus, of her struggle to grow in faith and love, of her hesitant efforts to dialogue with men of other faiths; d) some of these formulae should be taken from the religious traditions of others, more so now, since we have a much deeper understanding of these religions, and also because the same Spirit that guided Israel is also with us. If we could all learn this from the Psalter, then there is enough justification for the Psalms to be a part of our Scripture.

31. One scholar has drawn up "conclusive evidence that Ps 29 is an ancient, Canaanite Baal hymn, only slightly modified for use in the cultus of Yahweh." S. L. SABOURIN, *The Psalms, Their Origin and Meaning* (Bangalore, Theological Publications in India, 1971), Vol. I, p. 62. For a complete exposition of the foreign influence on the Psalter, cf. Ibid., pp. 49-63.

Laity in the New Code

George V. Lobo, S.J.

ALTHOUGH the laity form 99% of the members of the Church, they are assigned only 8 canons in the special section of the New Code which deals directly with them. However, the first of the canons explicitly says that they have also the duties and rights "which are common to all the faithful and those in other canons" (Can. 224). In fact all the laws which do not refer specifically to the clergy or religious apply to the laity. So it is not from the number of canons assigned to the laity, but from the whole tenor of the new legislation that the position of the laity in the New Code is to be judged. In order to understand the new legislation concerning the laity, it is necessary to grasp the dignity and role of the laity according to Vatican II. A number of points have been *verbatim* taken from the Council documents.

Vatican II and the Laity

According to the divine and hierarchical structure of the Church, the faithful are distinguished between the clerical and lay states.[1] The religious are not an intermediate state but are called by God from both the states.[2]

However, from another point of view, there is a differentiation between the clergy and religious on the one hand, and the laity on the other. *Lumen Gentium*, after a negative determination of the laity as not belonging to the clergy or the religious, goes on to say positively:

> These faithful are by baptism made one body with Christ and are established among the People of God. They are in their own way made sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ. They carry out their own part in the mission of the whole Christian people with respect to the Church and the world.[3]

This is a statement of the role of the laity that is *common* with the clergy and the religious. So the Constitution goes on to describe the *proper* and peculiar role of the laity which is characterized by a

1. The role of the laity in the Church is specially treated in *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 30-38; *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43; and *Apostolicam Actuositatem*.
2. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 43.
3. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 31.

secular quality. Those in holy orders may at times engage in secular activities, and even have a secular profession. But the laity,

> by their very vocation, seek the kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and by ordering them according to the plan of God. They live in the world, that is, in each and in all secular professions and occupations. They live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven.[4]

This teaching is echoed in the Decree on the Apostolate of the Laity. The Laity, too, are said to have their own role to play in the mission of the whole People of God.

> But, since it is proper to the layman's state in life to spend his days in the midst of the world and of secular transactions, he is called by God to burn with the spirit of Christ and to exercise his apostolate in the world as a kind of leaven.[5]

Again the Council insists that

> The laity must take on the renewal of the temporal order as their own special obligation. Led by the light of the Gospel and the mind of the Church, and motivated by Christian love, let them act directly and in a definite manner in the temporal sphere.[6]

In describing the laity's role in secular affairs, the Council had three basic concerns:[7] 1) to vindicate the laity's right to share actively in the mission of the Church; 2) to acknowledge a certain genuine initiative and autonomy to the lay apostolate; 3) to affirm the truly Christian and ecclesial character of the laity's daily secular activity, prior to any ecclesiastical authorization.

The special secular character of the laity's life and activity should colour their spirituality.[8] Thereby, the Church as a whole would profit from the insights, perceptions and orientations which only full involvement in secular affairs makes possible.

Some distinction between the specific role of the clergy and laity is necessary. Still, caution is called for lest the roles be too rigidly understood. First of all, it is to be noted that the Council did not intend to offer an *'ontological' definition* of the lay person, but rather a *'typological' description*.[9] The Council was simply describing the typical situation or condition of the laity, and correspondingly, it would seem, also of the clergy.

---

4. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 36.
5. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n 2.
6. *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n. 7. Cf. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43.
7. Cf. Joseph KOMONCHAK, "Clergy, Laity and Church's Mission in the World", *The Jurist* 41(1981) pp. 427-428.
8. E. SCHILLEBEECKX, "The Typological Definition of the Christian Layman in the Church", in *The Mission of the Church*, New York, Seabury, 1973, p. 115.
9. See *Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani II*, III, III, Romae, Typis Polyglottis Vaticanis, 1974, p. 62.

Secondly, the special role of the lay members of the Church should not be understood as if the Church was integrally constituted before it faces the world. Such a conception has been clearly transcended in political theology in Europe and liberation theology in Latin America.[10] It has been basically excluded already in Vatican II when the Council declared that the Church is a kind of 'sacrament' of the unity of all mankind,[11] and that she serves as a leaven and as soul for human society.[12] Indeed, the Church not only cannot be defined or constituted without reference to the problems of human existence, but the world itself enters into its very constitution.[13]

Common Dignity and Role of the Laity

Can. 208 affirms the *fundamental equality* of all the members of the Church founded on the baptismal consecration:

> Flowing from their rebirth in Christ there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful. Because of this equality they all contribute, each according to his or her condition and office, to the building up of the Body of Christ.

Any differentiation in role and function should take into account this basic truth. In fact in a significant text the coetus of the Code Commission on the Laity emphasized that the revised law should avoid an overly stratified ecclesiology while duly reflecting the conciliar stress on the fundamental equality of all the faithful.[14] While respecting the special role of the hierarchy, the need was felt for stressing even more the dimension of the Church as *communion*, especially regarding the active involvement of all the People of God in its mission.

The New Code does seem to reflect the conciliar vision although some traces of clericalism and paternalism are still left Can. 209 calls the faithful to preserve the spirit of communion *with* the Church at all times and invites them to excercise their responsibilities *toward* the Church; it would have been better in both cases to say '*in*' the Church. The communion dimension has not always been sufficiently kept in mind in formulating some of the canons. The New Code tends to overly condition the articulation of rights so that their limitation seems essential to the rights themselves and not to their

---

10. For example, J. B. METZ, *Theology of the World*, New York, Herder and Herder, 1969; C. DAVIS, *Theology and Political Society*, Cambridge University Press, 1980, G. GUTIÉRREZ, *A Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, Orbis, 1973

11. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 1.

12. *Gaudium et Spes*, n. 43.

13. Apostolic Letter of Pope Paul VI, *Octogesima Adveniens*, May 14, 1971, n 37.

14. *Communicationes* 2 (1970), n. 96.

exercise. It speaks of 'obligations and rights', even when the Old Code had 'rights and obligations'.[15]

Still, the common call to holiness and promotion of the growth and sanctification of the Church is affirmed (Can. 210). The basis for this is the incorporation of all the faithful into Christ and their participation in their own way in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ (Can. 204, 1).

Likewise, the obligation and right of everyone of the faithful to strive "so that the divine message of salvation may more and more reach all people of all times and all places" is also stressed (Can. 211). But, in the section on the Ministry of the Word, it is said that "it belongs to priests, as cooperators of the bishops, to proclaim the Gospel of God" (Can. 757) The laity are said to be only witnesses to the Gospel although they could be "called upon to cooperate with bishops and priests in the exercise of the ministry of the word" (Can. 759). This statement seems to minimize the responsibility of the laity arising from their baptism to proclaim the Good News. The special role of the clergy in this matter could have been brought out in some other way. It must be admitted that in the section on the Laity the balance is somewhat redressed by saying that, like all Christ's faithful, lay people "are deputed to the apostolate by baptism and confirmation" (Can. 225, 1). This obligation is said to be "more insistent in circumstances in which only through them are people able to hear the Gospel and to know Christ".

All this shows that the Code wants to bring out the common role of all the faithful as well as the special role of the clergy. But the statements could have been harmonized better.

Can. 212, 1 and 2 expresses the duty of the faithful to show Christian obedience to their Pastors who represent Christ in what they teach and prescribe, even while they have a right to make known their needs and wishes. It should be noted that *Lumen Gentium* states that the laity should do this "with the freedom and confidence which befits a son of God and a brother in Christ".[16]

The canon goes on to say that they have also the right, indeed at times the duty, according to their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the Pastors their views on matters that concern the good of the Church (para 3). This right like all others surely needs caution, but perhaps the qualifications mentioned in the canon are a bit overemphasized. The coresponsibility of all sections

15. Cf. Canon 87 of the Old Code.
16. N. 37.

of the People of God in the life and mission of the Church could have been brought out better, even while affirming the distinctive role of each.

Can. 213 pertinently affirms the right of the faithful to be nourished by their pastors, especially with the Word of God and the sacraments, for there is a tendency on the part of some priests to neglect this their primary role while being preoccupied without special need with other affairs.

Incidentally, after the first four canons of this section (208-211), the Code unwittingly returns to the old idea of separating the faithful from the pastors. This is a sign that we are not yet fully able to include the pastors among the faithful!

The rights of the faithful to freely establish and direct charitable and pious associations (Can. 215), to promote and support apostolic action by their own initiative (Can. 216), to a Christian education which leads to human maturity and to know and live the mysteries of salvation (Can. 217) need to be specially stressed in the case of the laity since some of these rights have been badly neglected in the past.

Can. 221, 1 declares the right of the faithful to defend their rights in the Church before the competent ecclesiastical forum. One special instance is the right to obtain the annulment of a marriage that a person thinks is invalid. When there are sufficient a priori grounds for annulment, the basic right to marry may be violated if the case is not taken up and decided within a reasonable time.

Religious Formation

While Can. 217 speaks of the right of all the faithful to a Christian education, Can. 229 is more specific in applying it to the laity. First it is said that lay people have "the right and duty to acquire the knowledge of Christian teaching which is appropriate to each one's capacity and condition". Indeed the religious formation of a person should keep pace with secular and technical education.

Now the fullest opportunity is offered to the laity to acquire academic degrees in sacred sciences from ecclesiastical Universities and Faculties as well as to receive a mandate to teach the sacred sciences (Can. 219, 2 and 3). There is a need to declericalize academeic degrees in sacred sciences. While lay people should be freely accepted as students and staff, there is no need for every priest to strive to acquire such degrees. A more pastoral course would be better for many clerics while degrees should be destined for those who have sufficient aptitude and interest in academic studies.

Can. 231, 1 reminds lay people pledged to some special service of the Church that they have a duty "to acquire the appropriate formation which their role demands, so that they may conscientiously, earnestly and diligently fulfil their role". This applies to liturgical roles as well as to ecclesiastical offices.

Ecclesiastical Office and Jurisdiction

Office in the Church is "any post which by divine or ecclesiastical disposition is established in a stable manner to further a spiritual purpose" (Can 145, 1). Under the old law, only clerics could be appointed to an office and the subject was treated under the section on Clerics, although clerics were understood in a wider sense than now. Formerly, one became a cleric by receiving the tonsure. Now, only 'sacred ministers' beginning with deacons, are called clerics (Can 207, 1).

Vatican II has opened the way for lay people to be entrusted with an ecclesiastical office,[17] and the matter has been shifted to Book I of the Code on General Norms However, the Council did not settle the question whether a lay person could have an office to which true jurisdiction (power of governance) is attached.

Pope Paul VI derogated from the old Canon 118, whereby clerics alone were able to obtain the power of jurisdiction, in his Motu Proprio *Causas Matrimonaiales*.[18] This allows a lay man (*vir*) to serve as judge on a collegiate marriage tribunal. Ecclesiastical judges certainly exercise true jurisdiction. John M. Huels remarks that "the legislator would not allow laymen to be judges if they were ontologically incapable of exercising jurisdiction".[19]

The Code Commission itself has explicitly stated that every form of ecclesiastical governance or jurisdiction can no more be reserved to clerics.[20]

The New Code first declares that it is those in sacred orders who are capable of the power of governance, also called the power of jurisdiction (Can. 129, 1). But it goes on to say that "lay members of Christ's faithful can cooperate in the exercise of this same power in accordance with the law" (para 2).

17 *Lumen Gentium*, nn. 33, 37; *Presbyterorum Ordinis*, n. 9; *Apostolicam Actuositatem*, n 24.

18. March 28, 1971. *Acta Apostolicae Sedis* 63 (1971) pp. 441-446.

19. John M Huels, "Another Look at Lay Jurisdiction", *The Jurist* 41 (1981) p. 75.

20. *Communicationes* 3 (1971) p. 187.

Now the Episcopal Conference can permit lay persons, men or women,[21] to be appointed judges so that, when necessary, one of them can be chosen in forming a college of judges (Can. 1421, 2).

If the notion of jurisdiction is extended to the teaching and sanctifying functions, any type of ministry for which juridical determination is required could be considered jurisdictional.[22] Then the canonical mission (*mandatum*) required for a theology professor to teach in any institute of higher studies (Can. 812) or that obtained by lay catechists who are specially "called upon to cooperate with bishops and priests in the exercise of the ministry of the word" (Can. 799) would be jurisdictional.

Here it would be helpful to briefly discuss the basis for conferring jurisdiction on lay persons. In the past, the argument against lay persons receiving it was that jurisdiction always presupposed ordination. The underlying idea was that canonical mission is merely a juridical formality by virtue of which the ordained person can exercise what he already possesses fully by ordination. However, jurisdiction, as J. James Cueno puts it, "is the *power of communion*, a power to function in the Church which is based on the relationship of individuals to the unity of the Church and to the unity of its mission".[23]

In fact, there is only one sacred power in the Church, deriving from Christ. Order and jurisdiction are two expressions of that power. Moreover, jurisdiction does not necessarily depend on holy orders. Hence there is nothing to hinder lay persons from receiving it unless the jurisdiction is connected with an act that implies the power of order as for sacramental absolution.

Does this mean that jurisdiction need not derive from the sacramental reality of the Church ? To dissociate governance from the sacramental reality of the Church would cut it off from Christ, the *Ursakrament*, and reduce it to some form of secular dominance. In order to act authoritatively in the name of the Church, one must be basically united with the Church through the sacraments of initiation.[24] Hence the laity, by virtue of their incorporation into Christ and the Church by baptism and the strengthening of this bond through confirmation, are capable of true jurisdiction or canonical mission for an authoritative relationship within a designated com-

21. Simply the word '*laici*', not '*viri laici*' is used.

22. Cf. J. James CUNEO, "The Power of Jurisdiction: Empowerment for Church Functioning and Mission Distinct from the Power of Order", *The Jurist* 39(1979) p. 212.

23. Art. cit., p. 217.

24. John M. HUELS, art. cit., pp. 69-70.

munity. The clergy and laity alike can participate in Church pow not immediately based on holy orders because of a commo foundation, which is Christ, the one source of power, acting throug the sacraments of initiation.

However, we must point out that, although ecclesial referen is always needed for authentic ministry, one need not always hav jurisdiction for exercising one's mission in the Church. From th very fact of their union with Christ the Head through baptism an confirmation, the laity derive the right and duty to exercise th apostolate.[25] Only for participation in the 'official' ministry o the hierarchy does a lay person need jurisdiction.

Hence, on the one side, we must affirm the capacity of th laity to receive jurisdiction; but, on the other, we must not brin in jurisdiction to legitimate the mission of the laity. To do thi would be to clericalize the role of the laity and make them over dependent on the clergy.

Specific Offices in the Church

Lay people are called to participate in every aspect of the Church's life. Besides their capacity to act as ecclesiastical judges to which reference has already been made, a bishop may approve a lay person to be an 'auditor' to 'instruct' a case (i.e., to gather evidence), to be 'promotor of justice' or 'defender of the bond' (Cans 1428; 1435).

In the diocesan curia, lay persons may assume the posts o Chancellor or of Notary, except for certain cases concerning th clergy (Can. 483, 2). They could be appointed members of th Diocesan Financial Committee or even to be Financial Administra tors. Likewise they could be chosen or elected members of th Diocesan Pastoral Council (Cans 511-514) or of the Diocesan Synod (Can. 463, 2).

Where there are Parish Councils, the laity are obviously to be members (Can. 536). They could be members of the Parish Financ Council (Can. 537). They could be entrusted with the pastora care of a parish when there is a shortage of priests, but under th responsibility of a priest (Can. 517, 2).

Ministry of the Word

All lay people, by reason of their baptism and confirmatio are witnesses to the Good News, by their words and good exampl

25. Cf. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 3.

and can be called upon to cooperate with the clergy in the exercise of the ministry of the word (Can. 759). They can preach if need arises or on occasions specified by the Episcopal Conference (Can. 766), although the homily during Mass is reserved (it would seem, normally) to priests and deacons (Cans 767, 1; 771, 1).

Parents have a special duty by word and example to form their children in the Christian faith and life (Can. 774, 2). This is an important instance by which the work of catechesis extends to all the members of the Church, to each according to his or her situation (Can. 774, 1).

Laity are included among those termed missionaries in the proper sense (Can. 784). Catechists must be lay people "who have received proper formation and are outstanding in their living of the Christian life" (Can. 785, 1). Under the leadership of missionaries, they are to present the Gospel message, conduct liturgical worship and organize works of charity.

Role in Divine Worship

As lay people are called to active participation in Christian worship, they can be given any role which does not necessarily imply the power of orders.

Can. 230 sanctions what has already become an established practice in several places. However, while lay *men* who meet the requirements prescribed by the Episcopal Conference can be given the *stable* ministry of lector and acolyte through the prescribed *liturgical rite*, lay women can only receive a temporary assignment to the role of lector, and fulfil the roles of commentator, cantor and the like in liturgical rites (para 2). They seem to be excluded from the role of acolyte. The Holy See at present is firmly opposed to women serving as altar servers. This is perhaps the only area implying discrimination against women — apart, of course, from their exclusion from holy orders which by itself is a big question. It would have been desirable to avoid this discrimination. Is it being maintained because the stable ministries of acolyte and lector are also conferred on those destined to holy orders ?

Para 3 provides that, when ministers are not available, lay people, men or women, supply certain functions like presiding over liturgical prayers, conferring baptism and distributing holy communion. Many bishops have already been authorizing lay persons to exercise these functions. It is to be hoped that hesitations in this regard will soon be shed in the light of the clear indication in the

new law. Permitting lay persons to distribute holy communion would, in many circumstances, allow people to profit by the grace of the sacrament, including religious who cannot participate in daily Mass. To cope with large numbers of communicants at eucharistic celebrations, either the ministry of acolyte could be conferred on some lay men, or other lay men or women could be allowed to distribute communion Otherwise, either undue delay will result or holy communion might be distributed with unseemly haste — as is in fact happening in many places.

It should also be noted that when there are no priests or deacons, the bishop may delegate lay persons to assist at marriage, after prior approval by the Episcopal Conference and the permission of the Holy See (Can 1112, 1).

Thus the New Code marks a distinct progress in recognizing the priestly role of all the baptized. However, many of the prescriptions still seem to be reluctant concessions on the part of the clergy rather than a whole-hearted recognition of the baptismal dignity of the laity.

Proper Role of the Laity

In line with the Conciliar doctrine, the Code assigns to the laity "the special obligation to permeate and perfect the temporal order of things with the spirit of the Gospel In this way, particularly in conducting secular business and exercising secular functions, they are to give witness to Christ" (Can. 225, 2).

However, considering the enormity and urgency of the problem of social justice and liberation, the Code's reference to the obligation of the faithful to promote social justice (Can. 222, 2) seems inadequate. A more detailed spelling out of the role of the faithful regarding the defence and promotion of human rights, the struggle against all forms of discrimination and oppression and, indeed, participation in bringing about structural changes in society would have been desirable. The responsibilities of the laity in the socio-economic, political and cultural fields could have been developed. Ample sources were available for the purpose in Conciliar documents and papal encyclicals.

Can. 227 has a welcome statement regarding the freedom of lay persons in secular affairs which is common to all citizens. However, they are cautioned that in using this freedom they are not only to ensure that "their actions are permeated with the spirit of the Gospel", but must "heed the teaching of the Church proposed

by the magisterium" and "be on guard, in questions of opinion, against proposing their view as the teaching of the Church".

Among the specific roles of the laity is the obligation of those who are married "to strive for the building up of the people of God through their marriage and family" (Can. 226, 1). This recalls the teaching of Vatican II according to which the family is "so to speak, the domestic Church" and the source from which "new citizens of human society are born".[26]

Right of Association

The New Code recognizes that the faithful "may freely establish and direct associations which serve charitable or pious purposes or which foster the Christian vocation in the world, and they may hold meetings to pursue these purposes by common effort" (Can. 215). Laity or clerics, or laity and clerics together may form associations which "strive with a common effort to foster a perfect life, or to promote public worship of Christian teaching. They may also devote themselves to other works of the apostolate, such as initiatives for evangelisation, works of piety or charity, and those which animate the temporal order with the Christian spirit" (Can. 298, 1). Thus there is the widest scope for the laity to form associations in the spiritual and temporal sphere.

However, some distinctions and qualifications have to be kept in mind. Competent ecclesiastical authority alone can establish associations which intend to impart Christian teaching *in the name of the Church*, or to promote public worship and the like (Can. 301, 1). Only those associations which are established by the competent authority for these or other purposes are called '*public*' in the Church (Can. 301, 3). All others are called '*private*', even if they are "praised or commended by ecclesiastical authority" (Can. 299, 2).

For secular, charitable or social purposes, as well as for discreet spiritual aims, there is no need of any recognition by authority (Can. 299, 1). Still, none of such associations may be called 'Catholic' without the consent of the competent authority (Can. 300). The Code also suggests that the faithful are to join those associations especially which have been established, praised or recommended by the same authority (Can. 298, 2). However, it would not be advisable normally for Church authority to recommend particular political parties or trade unions. Neither would it be advisable to form such groups on a sectarian or denominational basis.

26. *Lumen Gentium*, n. 11.

It is understandable that associations recognised by Church authority should be under the supervision of the same. But Can. 305 declares that all associations of the faithful are subject to such supervision. This is qualified by saying that the competent authority "is to ensure that integrity of faith and morals is maintained in them and that abuses in ecclesiastical discipline do not creep in". However, the due autonomy of the associations and ultimately of the faithful who comprise them should be respected.

Continued from p. 320

It includes a preferential choice for the social position of the poor. Prayer is an indispensable ingredient of this process of purification. It intensifies the light of faith and purifies love.

In Part II Libânio discusses the structure of discernment. Discernment calls for a spiritual atmosphere for searching the will of God above everything. The will and plan of God is discerned by confronting history to search its meaning and interpret it. Seeking the will of God is faith-interpretation of history. Libânio discusses various types of discernment against the background of the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius which he applies to the transformation of society through social apostolates.

In the Third Part, the author discusses two types of criteria of discernment: subjective and objective. The subjective criteria refer to the potentialities of subjects, individual or groups, bound as they are to their own existential history. The objective criteria are theological. Libânio examines them at three levels: theological, Christological and ecclesiological.

The book deals with a topic of great relevance to Christian spirituality. It brings into spiritual discernment a dimension which is needed in fixing priorities and making social options in the complex realm of politics on which our Christian faith must bear. Seeking God's kingdom and his justice demands a new quality of discernment. Despite its cursory and brief treatment of certain aspects, the book is a challenge to such a task. S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Anglicanism

The Anglican Spiritual Tradition By John R. H. MOORMAN. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1983. Pp. ix-228. £ 8.95.

Bishop John R. H. Moorman held the see of Ripon until his retirement in 1975. He was chief Anglican observer during the Second Vatican Council and wrote about his experience at the Council in *Vatican Observed*, published by the same firm. He is a high-churchman, deeply imbued with the Franciscan tradition.

His survey of the Anglican spirituality opens with a prologue of 12 pages. It depicts the evolution in mind and heart of a fictitious English priest, named also fictitiously James Whyte. He is shown passing through the four stages that marked the English Reformation, from schism to establishment. Though somewhat similar to the proverbial Vicar of Bray, he appears more sympathetic, while his character and spiritual evolution are clearly given an Anglican slant. Fictitious as he is, he is made to fit into the picture of a Church which became a national Church, without, however, entirely losing its ancient roots.

The seven chapters into which the history falls are to my view quite comprehensive. Cranmer and Andrews, Jewel and Hooker, George Herbert of Bemerton and of course John Wesley, the founder of Methodism are given their rightful place. The author is probably right in his claim that Anglican fervour in the XVIIIth century was not as low as is too often believed; but perhaps Bishop Moorman does not pay sufficient attention to the influence exercised by French writers, therefore Catholic, on revivalists like John Wesley.

Then comes the Oxford Movement, and with it the renewal of catholic features in modern Anglicanism. It cannot be denied that between the 16th and the 19th-20th centuries there is found a vast difference in the Anglican Church, including missionary endeavours all over the world.

This is a well-balanced treatment of a difficult topic. E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Consecrated Life in the New Code: The Religious

Carlos M. DE MELO, S.J.

THE first ever Code of Canon Law, the one of 1917, had only one type of "consecrated life" in its legislation — the religious. The Secular Institutes had already come into existence but they had yet to take full shape and reach the stage of development that was needed for their incorporation into the Church's book of laws.

The present Code includes under the general label of "Consecrated Life" a wider variety of ways of life and of qualified service of God and man. Under the impact of the Word of God and the action of the Holy Spirit they have emerged in the Church from the early days of the solitaries and the coenobites down to our own times. In a first section the Code lays down norms that affect all these various types of consecrated life, including individual ones like that of the hermits, or the virgins living in their own homes as did their sisters of the early centuries of the Christian era. Indeed, the Code is open to new forms that the Spirit of God may eventually raise in the midst of the community of Christ's disciples (cf. c. 605).

We have already commented on those general or common norms in an earlier article in this review. The present article aims at giving a clear idea of the new legislation of the Church on religious properly speaking. Evidently we have in mind only the Latin Code and the legislation that is common to all religious institutes. It contains eight chapters dealing with the following topics: religious houses (erection and suppression); the government of institutes (superiors, councils, chapters, temporal administration); admission and formation; the duties and rights of the institutes and their members; their apostolic activity; the separation of members from the institute (transfer to another institute, departure from the institute, dismissal); religious elevated to the episcopal order; conferences of major superiors. All in all 101 canons. The entire subject is preceded by Canon 607, rich in doctrine and inspiration.

The Self-Identity of Religious

Religious Life is a consecration of the entire person to and by God. By "entire person" is meant first of all the deep core of one's being: let us call it the "heart" of the person. Everything else — all we have and are — goes with such total surrender of ourselves to our Creator and Lord: intellect and will, affections and senses, our fundamental desires and longings, the ideals that animate our life....

Such a total and unique handing over of oneself to God and the particularly intimate union it brings about between man and his Creator and Father witnesses, Canon 607 tells us, to the "admirable marriage" between God and man to which all are ultimately called — a marriage which begins on earth and reaches its culmination in the life to come, *in sinu Patris*. Basing itself on the Bible, the Liturgy and spiritual theology, the new Code, in a language that contrasts with the rather dry and all too juridical tone of its predecessor, calls the religious life a visible manifestation of that wonderful union which is a sign of the world to come.

Marriage means a call and a response. Through the marriage covenant two persons, man and woman, unite their lives and destiny in mutual faith and love for a God-given task that transcends them and points to eternity. The life of every baptized person is expected to be a response to such a call. Here the one who calls is not a finite, human partner, but God himself, and the marriage is "the wedding-feast of the Lamb" (Rev 19: 9). Though every baptized person is invited to this *admirabile consortium*, not all are aware of such a call and the sublime reality it embodies. The religious, by renouncing earthly marriage and by his sincere and persevering endeavour to live up to this renunciation, gives public witness to that unique call contained in the Christian vocation.

Such a dedication of oneself to God is evidently an option inspired by love and sustained by love. It leads to growth in love — love of God and love of men. Yet, our life's divine partner remains the unseen Other. Our surrender is therefore a leap into the dark, act of faith. Humanly speaking, it is a sacrifice and a privation, but God can and does ask such a sacrifice of those whom he loves and trusts especially. It is therefore a privilege to be called to such a life. Generously offered and faithfully adhered to, it makes of the entire existence of the religious a fragrant offering to God — *sacrificium Deo oblatum*, says the canon — a continual worship "in spirit and truth" (Jn 4: 23).

The vows seem to be the connatural expression of such undivided love and total surrender, not the only one, to be sure, but one that is particularly in tune with such an oblation.

The vows serve a twofold purpose: they canalize our generosity towards a closer imitation of Christ and dispose us for a greater outpouring into our souls of heavenly grace. They also strengthen our purpose and stamp it with a definitive seal of irrevocability: *ut signaculum*... (Cant 8: 6). For experience has painfully taught us how our will is frail in its pursuit of what is good and noble and how it feels the need of ties that make it firm and stable. Vows proffer that needed help. As Soren Kierkegaard beautifully puts it:

> However joyful and indescribable, love feels the need of binding itself (to the person beloved) and it is only when love becomes a duty that it is firm and secure for good. The security that comes from eternity pacifies all unrest and perfects love. For the love of the moment which is content with existing cannot get out of an anguish, that of being subject to change. On the contrary, true love, which having become a duty has, as it were, received within itself eternity, never changes or wavers. It is only when it has become a duty that love is eternally free, in a dependence that gives rise to happiness.[1]

The vows establish a relationship between man and God that belongs to the virtue of religion. What is more important, they free us for love and service. Three years after the closing of the Second Vatican Council, the Instruction *Renovationis Causam* empowered institutes of consecrated life to authorize novices to replace vows by other bonds called promises or commitments, for the period of time that runs between the first commitment at the end of the novitiate and the final one. This last had always to take the form of vows — perpetual, this time. One of the reasons that suggested this new proposal may have been that some religious, sisters in particular, felt that there was some sort of contradiction between a vow and temporariness: a religious vow, according to them had by its very nature to be perpetual, or else it is as if it was no vow at all. There is a point that deserves consideration in such an opinion. The main reason, however, behind that innovation seemed to be different. *Renovationis Causam* expresses it in the following way:

> Perpetual vows can be prepared for without making temporary vows. In fact, more frequently now than in the past, a certain number of young candidates come to the end of their novitiate without having acquired the religious maturity sufficient to bind themselves immediately by religious vows, although no prudent doubt can be raised regarding their generosity or their authentic vocation to the religious state. This hesitancy in pronouncing vows is fre-

1. *Vie et règne de l'amour*, Aubier, 1946, p. 35.

quently accompanied by a great awareness of the exigencies and the importa of the perpetual religious profession to which they aspire and wish to prep themselves. Thus it has seemed desirable in a certain number of institutes th at the end of their novitiate the novices should be able to bind themselves a temporary commitment different from vows, yet answering their faithful de to give themselves to God and the institute and to pledge themselves to a fu preparation for perpetual profession (n. 7).

Anyway, this was a temporary measure of an experiment character to be evaluated before the promulgation of the Cod then in the first stages of preparation. The evaluation of the innovatio seems to have been on the whole negative;[2] so the new Code mak no mention of those bonds in connection with religious.[3] Actual this is one of the features that sets religious apart from oth institutes of consecrated life. As Canon 607, § 2 says:

A religious institute is a society in which, in accordance with their ow law, the members pronounce public vows and live a fraternal life in commo The vows are either perpetual or temporary; if the latter, they are to be r newed when the time elapses.

The vows bind us to God, but religious life is by its very natur placed at the service of the Church, of our brothers and sisters Moreover, religious men and women live out their dedication t God and man in the context of a community of like-minde companions who share the same vision and pursue the same goals Hence the emphasis on "life in common". This, the canon says must be "fraternal". We shall soon come back to this point.

A third distinguishing feature of the religious life indicated b the Code is "separation from the world" (c. 607, § 3). Traditionall expressed in spiritual literature as *fuga mundi*, it has often in the pas been tinged with a somewhat negative attitude towards the world This may shock people today, yet we have to remember that th world of which there is question here is by and large the "world" of which St John speaks in his writings (cf. 1 Jn 2: 15-17)— the worl of sin, dominated by Satan, in constant opposition to Christ and his teaching, incapable of relishing the secrets and gifts of God, the world for which Jesus did not pray (Jn 17: 9).

However that may be, times have changed and our outlook o the world has evolved. Modern man feels hardly in tune with a type o sanctity that would walk through life with eyes all turned heavenward, with no regard or appreciation for the marvellous world of nature,

2. Jean BEYER, S.J., "Le deuxième projet de droit pour la vie consacrée" in *Studia Canonica* 15, n. 1 (1981), p. 102.
3. The Holy Father himself seems to have manifested his preference in th regard in a letter addressed by the Secretariate of State to the Code Commission, date 12 August 1980 (cf. *Communicationes* XV, n. 1 (1983), p. 58).

man and history in the midst of which Divine Providence has placed him. Our age is characterized by its rediscovery of man and its mastery over creation. This may be true. Yet, one may not be naive either, and consign to oblivion all that Scripture and the centuries-old experience of fallen mankind has been telling us about sin and devil. The world is, indeed, a battlefield in which the Spirit of God and Satan, his enemy, are at work, in mutual opposition, contending for the souls of men (cf. Eph 6: 12). Evil is a grim reality in our life; so, too, temptation to evil, and we often succumb to it, allured by the magic of power and wealth, or driven by the hunger and thirst for what André Gide called *les nourritures terrestres*. . . . On the other hand, Christ's saving message is essentially eschatological: *transit figura hujus mundi* (1 Cor 7: 31). Our hearts are made for nothing less than God; they must be set on him and on realities that never end. We are all called to the glorious freedom of the children of God.

By his very profession the religious testifies to this aspect of the Christian message. Hence a rupture with this passing world, or a certain aloofness and reserve which has nothing in it of coldness and indifference, or insensibility to the beauty and goodness that surrounds indifference, or insensibility to the beauty and goodness that surrounds us on all sides, nor — much less — condemnation of the material universe of which God said that it was good. Things legitimate for others, even holy, the religious, in fidelity to his special call, has renounced. He thereby points to the new world — the "new heaven and new earth" (Rev 21: 1)— that is to come, fruit of Christ's death and resurrection.

Life in Common

As we have said above, life in community is a basic feature of the religious life proper. Without forgetting that "communion" is the real soul of such fraternal life (cf. General Norms, c. 602), religious are called to give joyous expression to the deep union that binds them together in Christ by also living together under the same roof like a true family of Christ's disciples. Canon 608 requires of them that they live in a "house" legitimately constituted as such, under the authority of a superior. That house needs not necessarily be an independent building constructed for the purpose with its own separate compound and wall. An apartment or a flat that shelters the members of the community would suffice.

Life in common, beautiful as it appears, is not devoid of its own problems. As experience shows, we need superhuman strength to overcome the many difficulties that spring from differences among

persons who have not chosen one another's company: differences coming from age, temperament, early education, race, language, country, views and opinions, etc. True, we are all Christians. We know well that the things that may tend to divide us are of much less consistence and worth than the finer realities that bind us together into one. Members of one community rooted in the Gospel, religious must love one another with a brotherly love that has its source in Christ and his Spirit (cf. Rom 12: 10; 1 Pet 4: 8); they must strive to be "of one heart and soul" (Acts 4: 32) like the early Christians of Jerusalem. In other words, they are called to a continual exercise of faith in order to live up to such a challenging ideal. Only an intense love for the divine Master can bring about peace, concord, union of hearts. Wisely therefore does the Code prescribe that each of their houses must have a place set apart as the "oratory"—a place of prayer and meditation where the Eucharist is celebrated and preserved. As the same canon says, the Eucharist must be "the real centre of the community". The Eucharist, that is, Jesus who died for us and rose from the dead.[4]

The Risen Lord is the constantly present but invisible Head of such a community of faith and love. On the human plane, however, he is represented by *a visible head* who holds authority and governs the community in his name — a "superior designated according to the norms of the law" (c. 608). Following earlier documents from the Council, Pope Paul VI and the S. Congregation for Religious, the Code gives no place in its laws to what some called "total collegial rule" as well as to superiorless communities, and heartily disavows them.[5] The superior, of course, need not necessarily reside in that one house; he may be staying in another house nearby, but he is the one who is responsible for the direction of the community. It is he who, for example, sanctions the absences of the members from the house. The old Code required a special permission from Rome

4. What about small communities ? The question is still under study (cf Questions and guidelines framed by the Sacred Congregation of the Religious and published in the June 1976 issue of *Sursum Corda* 14 (1976-1977), pp. 113-115). As *for the oratory*, *Evangelica Testificatio* speaks of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament as a normal factor in a community so as to enhance a life of personal and community prayer. Nevertheless, there are other problems that have to be examined: material conditions of the place insuring decency and respect, nearness to the local parish; extent of the actual presence of the religious in the house; etc.

5. Both the Conciliar Decree on the Religious Life (PC, n. 14) and *Evangelica Testificatio* take it for granted that every community of religious has its superior Already in 1969 the S.C. for Religious had in a reply to a request submitted to it in the name of the special General Chapter of an institute maintained that "the office of superior cannot be dispensed with in the government of local houses" (*Canon Law Digest* 7, 467) The same Dicastery considered what was called "*total collegial rule* with a local superior chosen by the group" to be ambiguous and unacceptable as a form of government for houses of the religious (11 August, 1973).

for absences that exceeded six months, unless for the sake of studies. Similarly the former law told the superiors of houses of religious women and the Ordinaries of the place to see to it that women religious did not leave the house unaccompanied except in case of necessity. The new Code tries to avoid discrimination on the basis of sex. Permission for longer absences are left to the discretion of the major superiors. The latter can, with the consent of the council and for a "just cause",[6] permit an absence that does not exceed a year.[7] If the absence is motivated by reasons of health, studies or an apostolic ministry carried out in the name of the institute, and in keeping with its spirit, the duration of the absence is naturally indicated by the particular need that calls for it.

The 1917 Code used the term *fugitivus* to mean the religious who leaves the house without the necessary permission though intending eventually to come back to religious observance. Such a one automatically incurred privation of any office he might have held, and if he was in sacred orders, suspension reserved to his own major superior; when he returned, he was liable to punishment according to the Constitutions or the gravity of the case. The present Code, without using any such derogatory term, merely prescribes, as otherwise the earlier Code also did, that in case a member keeps away from the religious community unlawfully, intending to escape the control of the superiors, the latter should try and go in search of him and help him to return and persevere in his vocation (c. 665, § 2). All the same, Canon 696 states that an illegitimate absence of six months may give rise to dismissal.

During these recent decades a new tendency has been coming to light among not a few religious men, and even women: living apart from the religious community in an apartment, all by oneself, or at times with some lay person as a companion. Those who do so are apparently moved by good intentions and by the desire of devoting themselves more freely and completely to a special apostolic ministry to which they feel called, or by the purpose of involving themselves better in the life of today's people, particularly the poor. Do such experiments meet the requirements of the fraternal life in common which those religious freely embraced and which the Church demands of the religious ?

---

6. By "just cause" is understood any reasonable cause proportionate to the dispensation granted, e.g., *reasons of a psychological or moral nature affecting the* religious concerned, or a peculiar family situation, etc.

7. Contrary to what obtained under the old Code this provision applies also to the diocesan law institutes. Their major superior, too, has in this matter the same power as those of institutes of pontifical right.

The question was taken to the S. Congregation for Religious. After a careful examination of its various aspects the Congregation issued a set of guidelines. In those Norms the Congregation says that *it cannot approve that type of life for the religious. The major superiors are not empowered to authorize such initiatives, even with the consent of their council, except in the special cases pointde out in the law (cf above).* It goes on to say: "*If living alone in an apartment represents a break with the community life imposed by the Church on religious, it certainly constitutes a source of serious problems insofar as observance of the vows of poverty and obedience are concerned....*" The same document goes on to state: "Above all, it is necessary to clarify the role proper to religious life as well as the fundamental characteristics which differentiate it from secular institutes or from eremitical life, and to have the courage to make the options in consequence". And it concludes with the following thoughtful remarks:

> All the efforts to protect the communitarian life will, meanwhile, remain inefficacious if we do not apply ourselves before all else to revaluating it. A religious community cannot be a simple juxtaposition of persons without true fraternal affection, without genuine communication regarding the plan of life and of apostolic work. How can a religious be attached to a community where no one *manifests* human warmth? *It is especially* appropriate to revaluate prayer in common, to promote reciprocity in listening, to encourage interest which should be shown by each one in the others.
>
> If communities manifest this human warmth animated by the Spirit, supported by prayer, lived in confidence and simplicity, divorced from the desire to separate themselves from their confreres, the religious will be eager to rediscover them and to experience those celebrated words of the psalmist: "Behold how good it is, and how pleasant, where brethren dwell at one."[8]

Connected with common life is the question of *enclosure*. The word is used by Canon 667 in connection with all religious houses, cloistered or not. It has to be understood in a broader or a stricter sense according to the nature and character of the institute concerned. Each institute has therefore to define in its own law the type of enclosure that best suits its needs and mission.

---

8. SCRSI, Guidelines 1977 (*Informationes* 3 (1977), pp. 207-212). In a rescript to a particular institute, after laying down certain criteria regarding absence from the religious house, the S. Congregation concluded with the following remarks: "1. It is certain that the best interest of all, the institute and the religious themselves, demands that the cases of religious living outside a community are not to be increased too much. Otherwise, we will arrive easily, and without any need, at the situation, complained of by some congregations, where the number of religious living outside a community is greater than the number of those living in community. 2. Experience proves that religious "outside community", unless they have truly serious reasons for being in this state, are no more than *nominal* members of their congregation" (27 February, 1973, *Canon Law Digest* 8, p. 412).

In a broader sense all religious houses are bound by a certain losure or separation. Canon 607 says that in every religious use there should always be a part reserved for the exclusive of the members of the community. What does this entail in ctice? Fr Jean Beyer, an expert in the law of the religious d consultor of SCRSI, holds the opinion that, for instance, it would against the mind of the legislator to allow women who serve the religious houses of men to enter into those parts of the house served for the exclusive use of the members of the community. cording to him the word *solis* in the canon makes this point mistakeably clear.[9] Fr Dortel-Claudot, a French canonist, quotes reply from the Congregation to the effect that "by places reserved sisters is meant simply that strangers may not enter into the places here sisters live, at any time and without a serious reason".[10] This uch regarding the common enclosure.

A stricter enclosure binds sisters of the contemplative life. ey generally live in cloistered houses or monasteries, like the armelites, the Trappistines, the Poor Clares, etc. They observe hat is known as the "papal enclosure", in keeping with the norms ven by the Council in *Perfectae Caritatis* (n. 16), by the Holy See the Instruction *Venite Seorsum* (15 August, 1969), and the letter of the CRSI of 2 January, 1970. Other monastic nuns who devote emselves to some external ministry (as, for instance, some Benedictine ngregations of women) are called to define in their Constitutions the anner of enclosure adapted to their life.

The diocesan bishop is empowered to enter into the enclosure the monasteries of nuns situated in his diocese provided there is a st cause and the consent of the Abbess or the Prioress has been tained. He may similarly, and under the same conditions, permit hers to enter into the enclosure as also to allow the nuns to leave e enclosure as need arises. The bishop's right need not be exclusive. e Holy See or the proper law of each monastery may extend this ivilege to others, for instance to the superior regular, or the supe-oress of the monastery.[11]

Enclosure separates the community from the world outside, t the modern *mass communication media* allow the world to netrate into the sanctuary of consecrated life. Canon 666 calls r the necessary discretion in the use of such means of social ommunication. Needless journeys and meetings are to be avoided

9. Jean Beyer, S.J., *Adnotationes in Codicem Renovatum*, Rome, 1982, p. 70.
10. "Les nouvelles dispositions sur la vie religieuse", in *Vie Consacrée*, 55 (1983), 191.
11. Cf. *Communicationes* XV (1983), p. 74.

as out of keeping with the spirit of silence and solitude professed by such institutes. Nor need the principle of equality between men and women followed by the legislator in the new Code be invoked in favour of a greater relaxation in this matter so as to bring the nuns on a par with some of the older Regulars.[12] The Church has the highest regard and esteem for the contemplative nature and character of these institutes of women and the precious service they render to mankind by their life of contemplation, intercession and penance (cf. *Perfectae Caritatis*, n 16).

Community and community life imply not only living together under the same roof, but also a certain number of *common exercises*: possession of material goods in common, recreations, meals, a minimum of community acts in which all take part. Chief among them are the so-called spiritual exercises or exercises of piety. In some communities the entire group assembles for these exercises at a fixed time and place, say in the chapel. Others follow a fixed hour but each one is free to choose the place that suits *him* best. Much will depend on the nature of the institute. Community life does not have the same implications, say for a Benedictine or a Jesuit. All religious, however, are called to be men or women of prayer. Canons 662 to 664 deal with this matter.

First comes a general principle. The following of Christ proposed by the Gospel was the one driving force that impelled the first solitaries, hermits and monks to leave their homes and families and betake themselves to the desert for a life of prayer and penance. This *sequela Christi* remains even today, as *Perfectae Caritatis* tells us, the fundamental norm of modern religious life. The Code reasserts this "supreme rule of life" taken over from the Conciliar decree and goes on to recommend certain spiritual exercises to the members of religious institutes: the daily celebration of the Eucharist, the adoration of Our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament, private mental prayer, the devout reading of the Word of God, the Liturgy of the Hours, etc. The Blessed Virgin, the special model and patroness of the consecrated life, must have a significant place in the life of a religious, including the recitation of the rosary. The annual retreat must be kept. Moreover they must cultivate habitual union with God by turning their mind and heart to him often in the day. They must daily examine their conscience and go to confession frequently (Cans 663, 664).

12. This is a reference to the Declaration issued by the S. Congregation for Religious on 4 June, 1970, allowing the superiors general of male religious orders (canons regular, mendicants, clerics regular), with the exception of monks, to modify their own cloister according to the norms of c. 604 of the Code of Canon Law.

The fruit of such fervent application to prayer will be a contemplative attitude to life.[13] Canon 663, § 1 goes so far as to say that "the contemplation of things divine and constant union with God in prayer is to be the *first duty* of all religious" (italics mine).

The fraternal life in common must be characterized by simplicity of style and *poverty*. In the 1917 Code the regime of poverty of religious followed two different patterns. Religious belonging to the congregations of simple vows retained the ownership of their goods and the capacity to acquire further goods (unless contrary dispositions were made in the Constitutions). They entrusted to whomsoever they wanted the administration of their goods. As for the use and usefruct thereof they freely disposed of it in favour of a person of their choice, without prejudice to the contrary dispositions in the proper law of the institute. Before the first vows the novice had to make a will leaving his property, actual or future, to the one he chose. Any later change in the will required the permission of the Holy See. Those on the contrary who belonged to the older Orders where solemn vows are the rule had, before their solemn profession, to make an absolute renunciation of all the goods they actually possessed in favour of whomsoever they preferred. They also freely gave up any capacity to acquire any further goods by way of inheritance. Whatever goods accrued to them by way of donation, gift, reward for their work, etc., belonged to the institute, in keeping with its law.

The new Code makes no distinction between simple and solemn vows in the section on the religious. Consequently, by common law, the regime of poverty is the same for all religious. However, taking into account the existing reality, it prescribes that in those institutes which by their very nature oblige their members to make the total renunciation mentioned above, that renunciation should be made before perpetual profession and, as far as possible, in a form that is valid also in civil law. They thereby lose the capacity of acquire

13. This contemplative attitude is aptly described in the letter of the SCRSI of March 1980, in the following passage: "We describe the contemplative dimension fundamentally as the theological response of faith, hope and charity, by which the believer opens up to the revelation and communication of the living God through Christ in the Holy Spirit.... As the unifying act of all human movement towards God, the contemplative dimension is expressed by listening to and meditating on the Word of God; by participating in the divine life transmitted to us in the sacraments, particularly in the Eucharist; by liturgical and personal prayer; by the constant desire for God and the search for his Will in events and people; by the conscious participation in his salvific mission; by self-giving to others for the coming of the Kingdom. There results, in the religious, an attitude of continuous and humble adoration of God's mysterious presence in people, events and things; an attitude which manifests the virtue of piety, an interior fount of peace and a person who brings peace to every sphere of life and apostolate" (n. 1).

further goods; any action contrary to the vow of poverty becomes invalid (c. 668). A professed of final vows of any institute can, similarly, if he wishes, renounce his goods totally or in part, with the permission of the supreme moderator of the institute. Another new point: to change the dispositions contained in the will, and to take any action concerning temporal goods, there is no need of recourse to Rome, as in the old Code. The superior who is competent, according to the institute's own law, can authorize the change.

Finally the *habit*. The Decree *Perfectae Caritatis* sums up the Conciliar debates on this point in the following brief statement:

> Since they are signs of a consecrated life, religious habits should be simple, modest, at once poor and becoming. They should meet the requirements of health and be suited to the circumstances of time and place as well as to the services required by those who wear them. Habits of men and women which do not correspond to these norms are to be changed (n. 17).

This topic came up for discussion also during one of the sessions of the Commission for the reform of the Code.[14] One of the members proposed that in order to put a stop to the growing tendency among religious to drop the habit for no rhyme or reason, the following canon be inserted in the new Code:

> 1. Giving up once for all any sign of lightmindedness in this matter, religious will henceforward habitually wear, both at home and outside, a habit or garb sanctioned by competent authority. It will be a sign of their special subjection to God, of fellowship between the members of the same family, and an evangelical witness before the world.
>
> 2. The observance of this sane and holy prescription is entrusted to the vigilance of the superiors and chapters in keeping with the importance of the matter.
>
> 3. Out of their houses religious are, besides, bound by the diocesan statutes and the regulations issued by the local bishop.

This suggestion was not accepted as the proposed draft text was considered sufficient for the purpose. It belonged to the superiors to enforce it.

Another member advanced a proposal in the opposite direction. According to him, it would be enough if the religious wore a distinctive sign of their institute, for "nowadays it is impossible to wear the habit everywhere". This suggestion, too, was notap proved. The Conciliar Decree made explicit mention of the habit or religious garb, not just of a sign.[15]

The draft text of the Code therefore remained unchanged. It prescribes that both as a sign of their special consecration and as

14. Cf. *Communicationes*, l.c., p. 75.
15. Cf. PC, n. 17; *Evangelica Testificatio*, n. 22; Letter of the SCRSI of 10 July 1972

a witness to poverty, religious should wear the habit prescribed by their Constitutions. If they are clerics and have no special habit of their own, they should wear the clerical garb in use in the place where they reside (c. 669).

Next comes a new and important statement. Canon 670 mentions the duty each institute has of procuring for its members all that is necessary not only for life and sustenance but for the attainment of the end of their vocation, both spiritual and apostolic, professional and practical. The obligation is grave and the Constitutions and Directives must spell out the practical applications flowing from this real right of the members. Those in positions of government must, on their side, be aware of their obligations in this regard.

The Apostolic Activity of the Religious

The section on the apostolic activity of the institutes puts together a certain number of principles and orientations that are to guide the work of the religious in the Church. Most of them are drawn from the Conciliar debates and had already entered into the life of the religious through post-Conciliar decrees issued by Pope Paul VI.

First comes in c. 673 the solemn declaration that the first apostolate of all religious is the public "witness of their consecrated life".[16] That is to say, by their very presence and their life of "prayer and penance" and of fidelity to their ideal, religious should testify to God's existence and love, to Christ and the Church. As Pope Paul VI declared in *Evangelica Testificatio*: "The evangelical witness of the religious life clearly manifests to the eyes of mankind the primacy given to the love of God" (n. 1). God is its main support. Consequently, the activity of the members of the consecrated life is not of any kind — it is apostolic activity. It takes on various forms in keeping with the needs of men and the ends pursued by each institute.

It is significant that the next canon in this section should be devoted not to the institutes of the active life but to those of the contemplative life. This takes us back to the discussions held in the

---

16. The text is taken almost *verbatim* from Bishop Richard Guilly's speech at the Council, 11 November, 1964. Among other things he said the following: "If we intend to speak of the renewal of religious institutes and their adaptation to the modern apostolate, we must first and foremost insist on this, namely, that religious men and women live fully the effective and total consecration of themselves to God contained in the vows of poverty, virginity and obedience.... All the rest that concerns external activity must draw its inspiration and norm from there: that is why, while we say that 'the rules and constitutions must be adjusted to the modern exigencies of the apostolate', we must at the same time stress that 'the external apostolate of religious must be adjusted to their rules and constitutions which foster and protect the interior life" (*Acta Synodalia Sacrosancti Concilii Oecumenici Vaticani* II, Vol. III, Pars VII, Vatican Press, 1975, p. 463).

Council. There, in the congregation held on the 11th November, 1964, speaking in the name of 263 Fathers, Bishop Richard Lester Guilly, S.J., of Georgetown (British Guiana), asked that the ecclesial function of the institutes of contemplative life be spelt out at length and their apostolic fecundity in the Church, particularly in mission countries, be duly recognized and extolled. We do not see it with the eyes of the body, he said, but faith enables us to appreciate the inestimable value of their life, hidden with God in Christ and offered as a sacrifice for the extension of his kingdom on earth. The ideas put forward by this missionary bishop entered, almost *verbatim*, in the Conciliar Decree.[17]

Following the lead given by the Council the Code, too, takes care to ward off the danger of restricting the apostolate of religious mainly to the active institutes. The institutes totally ordained to contemplation, it tells us, obtain always in the Church a place of excellence; they offer to God the sacrifice of praise, they illumine and edify the people of God by the example of their virtue and holiness, they obtain for them abundant graces and thus contribute to their vitality and growth. That is why, however much the need of apostolic labourers may be felt in the world, those given to prayer and penance in cloistered communities must by no means be withdrawn from their life of silence and solitude to be assigned to active ministries (c. 674).

At the same time all religious are called by virtue of their special consecration to foster in their hearts the ardent apostolic love proper to their vocation. In those who belong to active institutes this love takes the form of apostolic action. This is an essential feature of their calling. Their entire life must be imbued with apostolic zeal and at the same time "their entire apostolic activity must be permeated by the religious spirit" (c. 675): religious life and apostolic action form one harmonious, indivisible, united reality. As a recent instruction of the SCRSI has taught us, "the special characteristic of this activity is that it is inspired by the love nourished in the heart of the religious considered as the most intimate sanctuary of the person where grace unifies the interior life and activity." "This is", it goes on to say, "the only form of activity that is of the very nature of religious life since a sacred ministry and a special work of charity have been assigned to the institutes by the Church and must be performed in its name".[18] It must be "carried out in communion with the Church" (c. 675, § 3).

17. Ibid.
18. "Contemplative Dimension of the Religious life", March 1980, n. 4.

This absolute primacy of life in the Spirit must never be allowed to fall into oblivion, for the danger is always there that religious "become so much involved in the their work for the Lord as to forget the Lord of all work".[19] The first duty, then, of the apostle, as the present Pope said, is "that of being with Christ". Once, however, this has been stressed and safeguarded, the active religious, firm in his vocation and trusting in the grace that is attached to it, must walk boldly and generously in the way of life chosen for him by divine Providence. It is his privileged path to sanctity and fruitfulness. The lay institutes, both of men and women, participate thereby in the pastoral task and mission of the Church, the spouse of Christ.

Both superiors and the common members of institutes of active life must persevere in the mission confided to them by the Church, without at the same time failing to be attentive to the signs of the times and needs of contemporary man. Accordingly, they should try to adapt their work to the conditions of time and place, without being afraid to use new and more suitable means for the end they have in view. Putting it in other words, their fidelity to their charism must not be static, an exact repetition of the past. It should be a dynamic fidelity: while remaining faithful to and safeguarding the essential elements of their respective institute the religious of today must adapt themselves and their work to the new situations emerging in a fast changing world. The instruction *Mutuae Relationes* reminds us of this in the following pertinent passage:

> Moreover, the deep upheavals of situations, the growth of human values, and the manifold needs of the world today (cf. GS, pp 43-44) press ever more insistently on the one hand for the renewal of many traditional pastoral forms of activity, and on the other for the search for new forms of apostolic presence. In such a situation a certain apostolic diligence is urgently necessary in order to devise new, ingenious, and courageous ecclesial experiments under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, who is by his very nature *Creator*. A responsiveness rich in creative initiative is eminently compatible with the charismatic nature of the religious life.[20]

Special sensitiveness is called for today to the cry of the poor everywhere in the world, East or West. The religious must have the courage to place themselves openly and unambiguously on the side of the oppressed and persecuted, of those deprived of their dignity as human persons called to be the children of God. Such an attitude assumed in fidelity to the Gospel and under the direction of the pastors whom the Spirit has made overseers to care for the Church of God

19. Ibid., n. 2 (from the Pope's letter to the participants in the sessions organized by the Plenaria, 4-7 March, 1980.
20. *Mutuae Relationes*, 14 May, 1978, n. 19.

(*cf. Acts* 20: 28) may often bring these religious in conflict with civil authority or with political magnates, even within the Christian community. This they must be prepared to face. Human promotion and justice are integral components of the vast and complex mission of announcing the Good News of Christ to suffering humanity today.

Canon 677, § 2 calls attention to another point of which little is heard in our days. As we know well, there are certain associations in the Church which are affiliated in a special way to the corresponding great religious families, as for instance, the Third Orders (Dominican, Franciscan), the Christian Life Communities, etc. This canon encourages the religious concerned to take good care of the members of those associations and to see to it that they are imbued with the genuine spirit of their own religious institutes.

Government

The chapter on the "Governance of the Institutes" is divided as follows. After three introductory canons stating general ascetical principles regarding the office of superiorship (cc. 617-619) certain canonical terms are defined, such as major superior, province, supreme moderator (cc. 620-622), and the requisites for superiorship are laid down (c. 623). So, too, regulations about the duration of the office of superiors (c. 624), their election or appointment (c. 625), the council or board of consultors (cc. 627, 628), and the canonical visitation of houses (c. 628). The following article deals with the chapters (cc. 631-633). It is followed by a third article on the administration of temporal goods (cc. 634-640).

Superiors must fulfil their office and exercise their authority in accordance with the norms of the universal law (the Code) and the proper law of their institute. (By "proper law" is understood not only the book of the Constitutions but also the secondary or subsidiary codes such as Directories and the like). They are exhorted to look upon their subordinates as "children of God", to use their authority in a spirit of service and manifest thereby the charity with which God himself loves them (cf. PC, n. 14). They should encourage and promote an attitude of free and voluntary obedience by the respect and reverence they show their members as human persons. They must be willing to listen to them and make use of their talents and services for the good of the institute and the progress of the Church. While acting in this manner, they must at the same time safeguard their own right to take the final decisions they think best in the Lord and have them accepted and observed. Together with their companions they should endeavour to build up communities in which God is sought and

loved above all. The preaching of the Word of God, the celebration of the Liturgy, their own example of fidelity to the institute, personal attention to the needs of those entrusted to their care and guidance, kindness to the sick — these are some of the means mentioned in the new Code towards the creation and fostering of a fraternal spirit in the community.

The old Code decreed that major superiors should be temporary and that local ones should be appointed for no more than a triennium. At the end of the term they could be reappointed for another term, if the Constitutions allowed this, but not for a third term in the same house. No such limit is set in the new Code. Canon 624, § 1, however, takes care to state that superiors should be constituted for "a certain and appropriate period of time", except for the supreme moderator, if the Constitutions so determine.

Moreover, the proper law of each institute is to provide norms so that the same persons are not for long kept in positions of authority, without a break. Evidently, such a norm has in view the good of both the communities concerned and those superiors themselves. The former benefit by the flow of new blood (ideas, initiatives, orientations, relationships, etc.); the latter obtain the rest they would need for body and soul and gain by the renewed experience of life among the rank and file and the spiritual blessings the hidden life contains. Superiors can also be removed from office or transferred to another post for reasons mentioned in the proper law.

Again the old Code stipulated that to be appointed major superior one had to be thirty years old, born of legitimate wedlock, and at least ten years in the Congregation after the first profession. The supreme moderator had to be forty years old and elected according to the Constitutions. The new Code leaves the details about age and the years of profession to the respective law of each institute. It only determines that to be validly elected or appointed one should have spent a suitable number of years in the congregation after the perpetual profession, as indicated in the proper law, or, where the supreme moderator is concerned, in the book of the Constitutions. Where superiors are elected, the election has to be confirmed by the supreme moderator; where they are appointed, the choice must be preceded by a broad consultation among the members.

There exist yet a few institutes in which there is no perpetual profession. The vows are taken for a fixed number of years and are then renewed for the same interval of time, and so on. However, after a certain number of years spent in the institute, as fixed by the rule, one is automatically incorporated definitively into the institute. This

incorporation carries with it more or less the same effects regarding rights and duties as the perpetual profession does in other institutes.

A word about *confessors*. As we said in our previous article, the old Code had an entire article on chaplains and confessors, chiefly in connection with religious women. The present Code deals with the matter in just one canon of five paragraphs, making the law uniform for both men and women religious. First comes a reminder to superiors: they should respect the liberty of those under their charge in the matter of confession and spiritual direction. Secondly, they must nevertheless take good care to provide suitable confessors to the community. In the monasteries of nuns, in houses of formation and larger communities of lay religious, ordinary confessors should be provided, approved by the local bishop, after consultation with the community. The members, however, are under no obligation to go to them for confession or direction: all religious are free to choose the confessor and director they want, provided the discipline of the house is not interfered with. The old warning to superiors that they may not induce their subjects to make to them their confession is now slightly modified: superiors are told that they are not to hear the confessions of their subjects unless they come to them of their own accord. At the same time religious are encouraged to approach their superiors with trust and confidence and open their mind freely to them. As for the account of conscience proper, the superiors are in no way to induce them to this. A last paragraph tells superiors not to absent themselves from their houses for a long time, even for ministries outside the town.

Canon 563 speaks of *chaplains* for religious houses. The community must be consulted and the opinion of the superior is to be obtained. He or she may propose to the bishop a priest of their choice The bishop may then proceed with the appointment.

The new Code has besides a special short section on *chapters*, with several helpful prescriptions that were not found in the old. The General Chapter holds the highest authority in an institute,— highest not in the line of executive or judicial power but of election and the laying down of norms, or even of real legislation in case of clerical institutes of pontifical right. It must be constituted in such a way that it truly represents the entire institute and becomes a true sign of its unity in charity Details are left to the proper law of each institute. In fact, each should have its own special "Formula" or Order of the chapter.

Besides the General chapter there are in every institute provincial chapters and other meetings, periodically held for various reasons. Their nature, authority, composition, the time and mode of functioning

should be spelt out in the proper law of each institute. They should foster mutual knowledge, love, union and charity among the members; yet care should be taken not to convert thereby a non capitular institute into a capitular one.

Finally there is an article with seven canons on *temporal administration*. Every house should have an econome, distinct from the superior, even, as far as possible, in small communities. Directions are given regarding ordinary and extraordinary administration and the alienation of property. The last canon in this section reminds religious of their obligation to give not only individual but also collective witness of charity and poverty. "They are to do all in their power to donate something from their own resources to help the needs of the Church and the support of the poor" (c. 640). Does all this mean that they have to give up the bigger buildings they may be owning ? Not necessarily so. Much will depend on the local situation and the use to which they are put. As one author wisely remarks, it may sometimes be against poverty and charity to dispose of existing buildings with the result that accomodation and hospitality have to be refused to confreres in a house of their own institute. Here again, as everywhere, it is not the slogans of the day that should govern our life but proper discernment carried out in the light of the Holy Spirit.

(*To be continued*)

Church and Nation in a Secular Age. By John Habgood *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1983. Pp 197. £ 5 95.

This paperback is written by the present Archbishop of York, the second leading see of the Anglican Church. The writing is based on extensive reading of modern authors mostly in the line of social analysis, and on the pastoral experience of the author.

Secularism is rampant, if not triumphant, in many parts of the world. Britain is no exception. One of its main victims is the Church of England. Barely 5% to 10% or even less, of its members frequent the churches regularly.

In the first part of the book, chapters 1 to 4, Archbishop Habgood discusses matters such as secularization, pluralism, privatization ("religion is my own business"), the role of Christianity and of a National Church. The Church and its theology, and folk religion are also treated. The rest of the book, down to chapter 11, relates to the prelate's experience and personal involvement. It ends with an appendix on Theological Reflexions on 'Compromise', which bears the stamp of a typically English attitude.

Is secularization so new in Britain ? I would opine that it goes back to the 16th century with the establishment of a National Church. Perhaps ch. 6 on Establishment, i.e., on the 'Church of England established by law' is quite revealing in this respect. It asks the question: can the role of a National Church be primarily that of maintaining national awareness and of developing greater national identity ?

Ch. 9 on Ecumenism is entitled "What Future for Ecumenism ?". While conceding that the movement towards Christian Unity is "undeniably clerical", it notes that the laity is increasingly involved in it. Lay people "can frequently express impatience at what they see as clerical intransigence on the subject of unity" (p. 147).

E. R. Hambye, S.J.

Correspondence

Evangelisation and Social Justice

Dear Father Dupuis,

Unfortunately the January issue of VIDYAJYOTI reached me only yesterday I might therefore be too late, but I did want to make a comment on Fr A de Souza's article, "The Relevance of Christianity in India Today". It could provide some meat for your 'forum' or 'correspondence' section

What would exercise some of us here about Fr de Souza's article — and two or three similar ones in VIDYAJYOTI over the past year or so — is not the general body of the thing That is a well-accepted analysis, and well worked out too.

It is the smaller 'flicks of the wrist' which go with that analysis that disturb, because they are glimpses into a whole background view of human reality that is simply not well-informed – not informed regarding the evangelisation that is actually at work, nor even, I suspect, well informed regarding the actual grassroots reality of (at least some) marginalised rural people either

To take some specimens passages like, "the concept of evangelisation which earlier was identified with the proclamation of the gospel to expand the membership of the church" (p 16), "it is now seen that a purely personal morality is inadequate" (p. 17), a (still prevalent) "morality that has no reference to the social dimensions of the Gospel" (p 18) All I can say is that, after many years busy with evangelisation (neither old nor new, just ordinary and imperfect but very real and actual), I do not recognise ourselves or our work as at all authentically described here It is easy to make a caricature, a 'straw man', and then blow him down. It is an interesting device, but hardly an argument for a new view of evangelisation.

Admittedly Fr de Souza does also have comments like "The church was always helpful to the poor " (p 22), which points up the fact that it is not the concept of evangelisation which is at stake so much as its wider approaches.

A blunter expression is· "The *primary* task of the church is to promote human rights as the church's mission to the world " (emphasis mine) To take this to an extreme suppose that by centring our work on social justice issues we do come to a stage where, by hypothesis, the main structures of society do at last become just (something we all seek), but then, what ? Ah, then you would be left with a humanity that was still weighed down with its own greediness and self-interest, its weakness and its sickness, its loneliness and its suffering, and with death Now, we have a Guru — evangelisation is about Jesus, not about 'membership numbers' (p. 16), for God's sake ! — who speaks to us and who calls us on these far deeper realities of our existence on this planet, and who offers authentic life with that call.

This is not to detract, as I said, from the general social analysis of Fr de Souza After all, most of us here spend much of our day in the courts, in basic education, in rural 'preventive' programmes, etc But any vision of evangelisation, and any vision of the Church, that fails to look beyond social structures and to grapple with the more basic realities of our human condition — our greed, our suffering and our death — can *never* be considered 'primary'

— Finally I might as well add that a poor person, or one deprived in any way, is often very open to (may be more so than others) and often actually seeks just such a call as challenges him beyond food and physical wellbeing, beyond even social structures — a call that touches deeper, ultimate things in his being and his society. Now such a person has a true right to have that kind of call, that kind of person (Christ) opportunely announced to him This would be particularly so if I myself, his fellow human being, happen to have been grasped by that same call, and found true life therein

Catholic Ashram, Hans HENDRIKS, S.J.
Hazaribagh P.O., 825301

Should Men Help Women

Sir,

Like many others, impelled by an awareness of the obvious injustice suffered by women I had tried in my little way, through preaching, seminars and even occasional writing, to help out. I have a bit in Dr Jessie's latest book, and I notice that you dedicate the whole March issue to women

But now Ms Drego tells us (VIDYAJYOTI, March 1984, p 138) "I do not encourage you, men, to be benevolent or generous towards women .My message to you is not to do anything for the women in the Church. .".

Are we to take her seriously ? Then all the male editors of Catholic journals, including you, Sir, should not entertain any more articles by, about, or for women. *And people like myself who have tried to help should not do so any more.*

Rather, Ms Drego would like us, to "cheer from the sidelines and put your authority on the side of justice, *feminine justice*" (italics mine) One shudders to think *what she could mean by the last two words. Isn't it about time we men banded* together to form a 'male lib', or SPOMAW (Society for the Protection of Men against Women)?

The Cathedral,
Ajmer 305001

R. H. LESSER

The Venerable (not Saint !) Joseph Vaz

Sir,

Fr Hambye, in his review of a book on the Church in Sri Lanka in VIDYAJYOTI, February 1984 (p. 111), wondered why the Venerable Joseph Vaz is not yet canonised. It is a good wonder I wonder if those who are promoting (!) his cause could inform us We have heard little about him for years, while the causes of others seem to be *advancing quite rapidly*

Could the lack of progress in the advancement of the cause of this great missionary be due to a lack of money or sufficient influence in high places in the Church ? After all the Society of which Fr Vaz was a member, the Oratorians, do not seem to exist in India any more and the place where he was born, India, and the place where he worked, Sri Lanka, are both very poor.

Yet the canonisation of such a man of such great holiness, zeal and austerity cannot but be an example to so many of us, not sufficiently endowed with these virtues; so may I beg the promotors of his cause to proceed more energetically with what they *have been doing and to make the public aware of what they have been doing and how.* Perhaps, others may help in the promotion of his cause.

The Cathedral,
Ajmer 305001

R. H. LESSER

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Resurrection. Interpreting the Easter Gospel. By Rowan WILLIAMS. *London, Darton, Longman* and *Todd*. 1982. Pp x-129. £ 4.95.

This book is the outcome of the author's reflections occasioned by a series of Lent Lectures (1981) and his participation in the debates about 'Church and Kingdom' at the first meeting of the International Anglican Doctrinal Commission.

Starting from Peter's proclamation of the resurrection as first preached in Jerusalem, the author sees the resurrection of Jesus as 'the Judgement of Judgement' (ch 1) Peter's audience is one that has been a spectator, not a neutral audience, not an innocent audience, but an audience of participants. Peter's preaching "assumed that the hearers already belong in the story, that they are *agents*, that the things concerning Jesus have concerned and will concern them" (p 8) Against that background the resurrection appears as God's judgement of those who judged Jesus.

However, the victim has become saviour (ch 2. 'Memory and Hope. Easter in Galilee') In John's narrative, the resurrection appears as God's "proclamation that the 'pure' victim is more than victim when God receives and approves the condemned Jesus and returns him to his judges through the preaching of the Church" (p. 15), through the Church's life and structures, its ritual and its conscious attempts at evangelism.

Through its proclamation of the resurrection as source of salvation (ch. 3: 'Communities of Resurrection') the Church must pronounce judgement upon the prince of this world, but "only a penitent Church can manifest forgiveness" (p. 53). The Church is called "to be committed to the cause of the victim which God has made his own. It must be the voice of the voiceless" (p. 67).

The resurrection is a mystery difficult to interpret (ch. 4: 'Talking to a Stranger'). In the very narratives of the resurrection "alternation of the familiar and the strange is one of the most haunting features of these stories" (p 73), "the otherness, the unrecognizability, of the risen Jesus" (p 83), of the "familiar stranger", or "the alien friend".

"The aspect of the resurrection narratives about which the keenest and bitterest debates have raged in this century" (p 100) is 'The Risen Body' (ch. 5). No N. T. writer refers to the risen Jesus as merely a resuscitated body. He deals with his disciples in a recognizable manner "The apparitions are not fleeting manifestations of a normally absent being, but events which establish Jesus' *presence*, the interweaving of his life with the life of his community" (p 101) Hence one might be tempted to consider the 'body' of the risen Jesus as being in fact "the apostolic community itself, discovering grace in its life together" (p. 115). This is an attractive and plausible reconstruction but, for that very fact, perhaps also a dubious interpretation. The early Church took history seriously. Williams takes a serious view of the empty tomb "as sign of God's historical act of raising Jesus 'as a person', (as a 'body' in some sense)· I find this extremely perplexing, and cannot give any very satisfactory theological or philosophical account of it, yet I find it the least difficult interpretation of the New Testament record. Other options are more easily defensible on other grounds, but all seem unduly to shrink the range and complexity of our narratives" (p. 119).

The book ends upon the remark that the question really is not 'what happened to Jesus' or 'what happened to the apostles ?' What happened is "the advent of the Church — of a new style of corporate human life — and of its proclamation of release from the prison of mutual destructiveness." The interesting theological question then becomes: "How is this phenomenon, the advent of the Church and gospel, grounded in the conviction of the return of Jesus of Nazareth from the dead in such a way that neither Church nor

gospel would make sense without it ?" (p 119).

Starting from the fact that "Jesus who was deserted and executed is alive with God and also present to his followers" (p. 1), Williams examines the implications of the mystery of the resurrection for Christians, both individually and as a community. He mainly stresses the need of a sense of penance or conversion inspired also by 'hope' because of the victim who became saviour, in whose saving work we must share through our relations with one another and with all men.

The book offers no easy reading, but the study with its pastoral outlook is stimulating and thought-provoking.

J VOLCKAERT S.J.

Discipleship in Christ By Thomas KADANKAVIL, CMI. *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1983 Pp. 138. Rs 14

Somewhat in the manner of a preliminary or introductory chapter the book begins with an examination of the way of life of some of the OT prophets They were the servants of God, "the human manifestations of the word of God. They lived according to the mandate they received" (p. 5). Next to the prophets we meet the leaders of Israel, the 'shepherds' of God's flock. "The figures of the prophet and the shepherd merge in the fulness of the prophetic teacher priest — the God man Christ" (p 14). Against this OT background culminating in Christ the author examines what a Christian, a disciple in Christ, is (ch. 2). A true disciple "is one who learns how to live the life of his master, and having made his master's way of life his own, influences and inspires others to embrace the same discipleship" (p. 15) The path to discipleship (ch. 4) is faith together with silence and self discipline; following Jesus on the way of the cross (ch. 5), which leads to 'merging in Christ' (ch. 6). Three examples of true discipleship are given: the Twelve, the 'first community of followers' (ch. 3), Peter (ch. 7), and Paul (ch 8). The book concludes with a consideration of the 'uncompromising Christ' (ch. 9), as criterion of true discipleship.

The topic is timely. The writer notes that all Christians, not only religious, are called to 'a radical discipleship of Jesus'; yet, a true discipleship of Christ is hardly visible nowadays. Search for discipleship is being lost in a "confused world of tottering values" (p. 30) under the influence of a theology which excludes 'the cost of discipleship' enabling man to live comfortably. In his approach and exposition the author, at times, may appear disheartened, yet, in his foreword he notes that "the very awareness that the vital teachings of Christ appear to us as 'his hard sayings' marks the beginning of a hopeful awakening." One of the main points he most severely criticizes is an 'institutionalism which envelops Christians today'. He also challenges tendencies of viewing Christ as a political liberator or revolutionary, "a model for all revolutionary movements and civil disobedience" for our times (p. 126). He argues that what is needed is "a revolution which calls for the breaking up of our own hearts" (p. 132), a struggle against self, fellowship with Christ on the way of the cross, in a word, discipleship which is not subject to compromise.

The argument is based upon Scripture, not by way of proposing a biblical theology of discipleship, rather by making use of the biblical text as an inspiration or illustration of ideas. At times, the interpretation has a tint of fundamentalism especially when arguments are built upon chronology; in other places one would expect a more qualified statement or a more accurate expression, v.g., regarding authors and dates of the gospels. We are told that Jesus had a "special consideration to the beloved disciple, visible throughout this (John's) gospel" (p. 101), while, as a matter of fact, the beloved disciple is mentioned for the first time in ch. 13. The interpretation of 'the thorn in the flesh' as being 'some physical trouble or disease' (with a reference to Gal 4, 14f and 6, 11) is rather doubtful in the context of 2 Cor 12, 7. A quotation from the apocryphal 'Acts of Paul' describing the physical appearance of Paul (p. 111) looks to me out of place.

It is regrettable that a poor proofreading disfigures the book, some misprints are disturbing, v.g., 'theiosaner' for '*theios anēr*' (p. 93); salve for 'slave' (p. 101); Cicilia/Cecilia for 'Cilicia' (pp. 111 and 114)....

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J.

The Mystery of the Cross

The Cross a Pasture. By John DALRYMPLE. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1983. Pp. xii-114. £ 2.95.

There are a number of ways of approaching the passion of Jesus. We might, as we have been traditionally taught to do, try to appreciate through contemplation the physical sufferings Jesus underwent, or to find in him an inspiring example to cling to in the midst of our own life struggles. More recently, we have grown used to understanding the passion by going to Mt 25 instead of to the familiar narratives, to find Jesus in our suffering contemporaries. Still a fourth way to view the passion — and it is this approach that the author chooses to develop in these pages — places it in the context of all that preceded it, the passion is but the natural and inevitable outcome of Jesus' life and wholehearted commitment to his Father's will. If you love deeply, then you're bound to make enemies, and Jesus' whole life was one of love. "We must take the life of Jesus seriously if we are to take the death of Jesus seriously, because it was that life (and message) which caused his death." (p 24).

As with Christ, so with the Christian. It can be argued that only those sufferings that result from living by and standing up for Gospel values and the Reign of God can legitimately claim a share in Jesus' passion. This is, after all, what Paul meant by "making up for what is wanting in the sufferings of Christ". His struggles, recounted especially in 2 Cor, were all related to his apostolic efforts, not with the aches and pains of everyday living. Without a committed Christian life, we can never hope to appreciate, let alone experience, the mysterious power and freedom, flowing from Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection.

The passion of Jesus, viewed not in isolation nor as an end in itself, but as the necessary consequence of love in action and the only way to exorcise sin for a truly better world, can nourish and strengthen us in our own struggles and diminishments along the way to that Reign of God. The cross, then, can be a *pasture* for the followers of the Good Shepherd. (The title is taken from a poem composed by Karol Wojtyla during the second Vatican Council).

In the final chapters of the book, the author applies his thesis to concrete concerns of Christians today, such as international peace and justice, change within and outside the Church, personal growth and interdependent effort, the family, aging and death. While the perspective is not a third-world one, the insights are useful and applicable. A good book for spiritual reading and meditation by a best-selling author and parish priest who has obviously reflected deeply on his Christian life and ministry.

J. CURRIE, S.J.

Faith and Justice

Justice with Faith Today. By Pedro ARRUPE, S.J. *Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*. 1980. Pp. xv-320. Rs 15.50 (paperback), Rs 17 (hardbound).

Jesuit Apostolates Today. By Pedro ARRUPE, S.J. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1981. Pp xvi-363. Rs 26.50 (paperback), Rs 28.50 (hardbound).

The titles under review, the second and third of a three-volume selection of Arrupe's talks and writings, not only provide us with a fascinating history of the Church, through one of its religious orders, struggling to implement the vision of the council and succeeding synods in a tempestuous world, but also with deep insights into the candour, simplicity and wisdom of this extraordinary leader, who literally burnt himself out in service of the church. They deal with the heart of the Jesuit vocation as understood today. "the service of faith of which the promotion of justice is an absolute requirement". And they trace the different levels at which this vision is to be pursued. While the inspiration of such a vision emerged from two general congregations, few would doubt that it was through Arrupe's charismatic leadership that it was able to take hold, with all its creative tensions, within the entire order. This documentation forms Arrupe's legacy to his band of brothers. At the same time, it has much to say to other religious caught up in the same convictions and tensions, and to every committed Christian as well.

Published by the Gujarat Sahitya Prakash of Anand, in collaboration with the Institute of Jesuit Sources, St Louis, the volumes have been carefully edited by Jerome Aixala. Readers — Jesuit and otherwise — owe a debt of gratitude to both editor and publisher for their painstaking efforts in making these enlightening and inspiring documents available at relatively low prices.

J. CURRIE, S.J.

New Communities, New Ministries: The Church Resurgent in Africa, Asia and Latin America. By Michel BAVAREL *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books,* 1983. Pp. vi-122. $ 5.95.

"It is the poor who are the natural bearers of the utopia of God's kingdom", writes Leonardo Boff. "It is they who bear the torch of hope, and the future belongs to them." This is a conviction dawning on us, all too slowly perhaps in the more "stable" parts of the world today, but dramatically evident in the ferment of awakening peoples of the third world This book, written by a Swiss journalist whose main job over the past decade has been to visit and report on the young churches of Africa, Asia and Latin America, simply chronicles, by means of "candid descriptions" of grassroots communities of Christians, the experiences that justify this conviction Even traditional Church leaders marvel at this new Pentecost. "The poor are evangelising us", comments one bishop.

These sketches range widely from Chile to Zimbabwe, from Tunisia to Thailand, from El Salvador to South Korea They describe different struggles — to find their own identity in their cultural surroundings, to meet the needs of a growing Christian population and a diminishing priesthood, to stand by the oppressed and to stand up to the oppression of government policy and arms. And they reveal the multi-faceted potential of peoples to cope with these felt problems. Certainly, there is no monolithic Christian community these days, the Lord of history has seen to that

You will not find heady analyses in this work, but you will probably find yourself filled with excitement, after reading it, that the Church in fact *is* alive and well in some parts of our world, and that the beatitudes *are* a possibility As the last pages of the book state. "The Spirit of God, the tireless missionary, is at work, awakening his Church and those who have charge of it."

Joe CURRIE, S.J.

Faith and Politics

Holiness and Politics. By Peter HINCHLIFF. *Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1982. Pp. 213. £ 8.95.

The book is the result of the Bampton Lectures 1982. It is a book that is recommended to all those who are interested about political activity and personal faith. This despite the fact that the book suffers a little from having first been delivered in the form of lectures. All the same it reads well and is made all the more relevant by its references to recent events such as the Rhodesian Oil Embargo, the Watergate Scandal, the 1980 Olympic Boycott, Racism, Nuclear Weapons However, it could be criticised for limiting its references to mostly England and America. But for a brief reference to Liberation Theology in Latin America there is no reference to many conflicting issues in Asia and other parts of the world Surprisingly there is no reference to *the* non-violent champion and legend Mahatma Gandhi.

H. bases his moral insights on the life and teaching of Jesus. In fact he draws his principles from that of the Sermon on the Mount Jesus has shown us what the Father wants us to be and what it means to be a child of God. Man is to constantly overcome the ravages of original sin and repair and restore what it has undone. This is possible only in and through the grace of Jesus Christ. His grace helps us to own up to our own sinfulness (even when we appeal to something being the least of the evils present in a given course of action). His grace enables us to forgive and to be forgiven. It also enables us to obtain power to live more fully the fulness of life that Jesus gives us

While H. urges us to be more like Jesus Christ he cautions that morality cannot be forced on people. This is why he sees that there is again and again a conflict between 'the principled' and the 'expedient' Faith must come from within. In fact faith is given, not obtained The 'expedient' is the lesser evil among the other options for those who do not have the faith to go the whole way, to be totally vulnerable while trusting in the loving God to provide.

Though H. has argued and presented his case very well, the fact remains that even he is unable to provide any very precise, certain guidelines to keep one from anxiety in many situations and conflicts. The book is to be recommended to all Christians involved in the political field as he points out a sad but true fact that often the primary allegiance is to a political party and not to Christ Jesus and to the 'principled thing'. As all are political in some

form or the other all would benefit from reading the book.

Charles CARVER, S.J.

A World to Gain. Incarnation and the Hope of Renewal By Brian HORNE. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1983. Pp. 80. £ 2.75.

What can a Christian perspective offer to a world in search of renewal, a world nonetheless tottering on the brink of extinction and seemingly exhausted of its potential? "On every side we see signs of political cynicism and social despair, we see the remorseless destruction of the beauty of the natural world and the mindless waste of natural resources, we see the kind of disintegration of culture that makes the work of the artist seem trivial, meaningless or mad" (p. 76). The author seeks to restore a measure of hope to those infected by this current *Angst* — significantly more prevalent in the technologically advanced west than in the more seasoned cultures of the east — by integrating the doctrines of creation and the incarnation (traditionally strong in eastern Christian thought) with that of redemption (more the preoccupation of western theologians) The Christian, he feels, should be more concerned about "the sanctification of life" than about "the salvation of souls". He develops his thesis around the three central concerns mentioned in the above quotation· politics, the environment, and art.

While the Christian shares with the Marxist *a commitment to a world of* justice and freedom (the title of the book is in fact taken from the well-known promise of the Communist Manifesto), he sees this goal not as a utopian ideal but rather as the result of God's power working through Jesus Christ and his Spirit, and evoking in us a response and commitment to life. Hopes for a new world by a great leap forward alone, whether by rationalist or by revolutionary, have not materialised. "There is no middle path of secular optimism between the despair of Camus and the hope of the Christian vision of the world that is to be gained" (p. 9). "Groanings" there will be, within us, among us and around us (Rm 8), but these can be the growth pangs of the Spirit of Christ, inspiring us to word and action. It is our belief in the incarnation, of God and man mysteriously united in this world's history and destiny, that leads us to reverence life instead of ravishing it.

A tightly reasoned and convincing work, the first by its author, a lecturer at King's College, London, and the third in the publishers' Catholic Renewal series.

J. CURRIE, S.J.

Social Ethics and Politics

Spiritual Discernment and Politics. Guidelines for Religious Communities. By J. B. LIBÂNIO. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books,* 1982. Pp. ix-131. $ 6.95.

The book is a translation of the original Portuguese work, *Discernimento e politica* The English translation adds 'Spiritual' to Discernment in the title. The author seeks to throw light on the relationship between politics and the inspiration of faith derived from the Christian Scriptures In his view, this presupposes detailed study on the structure of discernment which still remains incomplete.

Used as we are to individual discernment *regarding vocation among alternative styles of life,* we do not easily think of discernment in the area of politics where justice and love find social expression Politics is essentially related to power, used either for the common good or for domination and manipulation It is the public realm of virtue and sin. Discerning the will of God in concrete situations has to do with the change of reality and transformative praxis. The book deals with a problem that is vital to the apostolic thrust of religious congregations and ecclesial communities.

Libânio divides his work into three parts. In Part I, he examines the prerequisite of purification of inordinate affections needed for sound discernment. He situates the source of inordinate affections in the "social position" with its subtle legitimations and ideological underpinnings. Only by freeing ourselves from the social position governed by the dominant ideology do we prepare ourselves for true discernment, whether at the province or community level Most of the practice of discernment regrettably takes place within an "inordinate" situation. A critical examination of the social position must be the starting-point for discernment whenever our choices concern social issues and apostolates.

Libânio rightly stresses the attitude of generosity in the process of discernment. It means an attitude of anticipation in searching the will of God. It moves us to put our spiritual energies at the service of the transformation of society.

Continued on p. 294. See also p. 313

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII **AUGUST 1984** **No. 7**

Editorial

Thank You, Fr Dupuis!

VIDYAJYOTI must begin this month by expressing its debt of gratitude to Fr James Dupuis who fulfilled his office as assistant and as editor of the review for the last eleven years with such fidelity and dedication. To him mainly we owe that the Journal has kept the high theological and pastoral standards established during the long editorship of Fr J. Putz and the shorter period under Fr M. Amaladoss. We wish God's blessings on the new mission which Fr Dupuis has received from the Superior General of the Jesuits to be professor at the Gregorian University in Rome. His qualities as theologian and as teacher will find ample scope there. Fr Dupuis is no newcomer to that University: apart from being its laureate in the year 1959-1960, he has gone there as visiting professor from India in the past few years.

The change of editor offers an opportunity to modify somewhat the editorial structures of the Journal. It is felt that it is unfair to leave to one person all the chores involved in the month-to-month editing of a review and that a more participatory structure is today indicated. The plan is to form a small editorial committee the members of which we hope to announce shortly, after the necessary consultations have taken place. Meanwhile and in order that the services to our readers may continue uninterrupted, the undersigned, Chairman of the Editorial Board, has been asked to take the responsibility for the immediate numbers, with the help of Fr G. Gispert-Sauch. VIDYAJYOTI, hopes to continue and advance along the path marked by its earlier editors.

In the survey of opinion conducted by the Journal last year, moral and pastoral problems had a very high priority among the topics desired by the readers (cf. August issue p. 314). This month's articles center on some of the burning issues of moral theology today: Fr J. KOTTUKAPALLY gives us a survey of the crucial question of nuclear disarmament, on which we will come back. Dr M. MASCARENHAS shows the ways in which the idea and practice of natural family planning are being spread today, while Fr S. AROKIASAMY makes reflections on the basic problems of moral theology.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

The Nuclear Spectre

J Kottukapally, S J.

THE Orwellian year has come. The nuclear spectre is with us Brand new weapons are being constantly added to existing stockpiles in superpower arsenals, which are powerful enough, we are told by those who know, to blow up the earth many times over If the Soviet SS-20s have put fright into the Europeans who had been used to older generations of nuclear weapons, each of which was many time more powerful than the bombs which wiped out Hiroshima and Nagasaki, so have the U.S. Tomahawk cruise and Pershing II missiles, which represent "the state of the art in Yankee ingenuity, the ultimate bang for the buck"[1] have put more than fright into the Soviet heart. But such "Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces" (INF) are, so it seems, fiddlesticks compared to the newer generations of "strategic weapons" being feverishly developed, namely, the MXs, Trident IIs, B-1 and silent bombers. Literally, the sky has become the limit, with the "star wars" earnestly starting, with the U.S. "Anti-Satellite Missiles" being tested and with plans being hurriedly drawn up and the best scientific talents assembled and set to work at the "anti-missile protective cover". But if all this is in the U.S. showcase, we may rest hundred per cent assured that the Soviets, whose nuclear genius in a short quarter century has not only caught up with, but (so Reagan fears) "has beaten" the mighty "Yankee ingenuity", cannot be lagging behind. Overarching such apocalyptic race there is also cold-war rhetoric blaring out from Washington and Moscow.

Numerous national bishops' conferences, besides the United Nations and groups of most eminent scientists and academicians from all over the world, have agonized over the nuclear spectre and given articulate expression to their anguish. While voters in front-line NATO states, like Britain and West Germany, have solidly mandated their destinies to hawkish leaders, anti-nuclear peace movements have not failed to disturb consciences seriously in these countries more than elsewhere. While the media have put the world on notice as to the consequences of even a "limited" (as though limitation was a viable concept !) nuclear exchange, scientists have warned that the danger of a total

1. *Time*, January 31, 1983, p. 7.

nuclear war and the consequent annihilation of civilization and life itself looms large on a horizon that seems to be inexorably closing in.

We, in this our Third World country, are in a rather unusual situation. Maybe, there are still those of us who feel assured that, like the two last wars, also a Third World War, even if it came, would leave us relatively secure — if not somewhat benefited. Though a truism, it has to be said that such is not going to be the case. A nuclear war, about whose starting our government or parliament would have nothing to say, will annihilate us, as it will the rest of humanity. In fact, very significantly, among the leaders whose opinions *Time* magazine sought for their "Men of the Year" (1984) issue on this question, there is not a single leader from Asia or Africa, not even the Chairperson (almost the darling of Western media) of the Non-Alligned Movement. So let us be clear about it for one thing, a nuclear war is more than a possibility, will cost us dearly, and so questions about it concern us closely, but we, that is to say, the vast majority of the human kind, will not and are not supposed to have any direct or indirect say in the decisions about such questions. And let us never allow this to slip out of our minds, as we engage in a reflection over the nuclear issue of the day.

A Brief Historical Survey

It was during World War II that both Germany and the U.S. worked with terror-stricken feverishness to develop the ultimate weapon, the atomic bomb, ahead of each other. In the event, Germany lost the race and the U.S. test-exploded the bomb in July 1945. And then, in the black August of the same year, when the war was over in Europe and Japan was on the verge of surrender, two of these were dropped over Hiroshima and Nagasaki, instantly killing nearly a 100,000 people and seriously injuring and maiming many more. That was the dawn.

For a time, the U.S. enjoyed virtual monopoly of the new weapon. But soon, the Soviet Union, which had, paradoxically, emerged from the jointly fought and won war as the U.S.'s main ideological and strategic enemy, got into the race, followed by Britain, France and later, the New China. The hydrogen bomb, much more powerful than the atom bomb, was developed in the 1960s by both superpowers. Then followed the development of new weapon carriers, the intercontinental and other guided missiles, as well as supersonic bombers.

During the Cuban Missile Crisis of October 1962, the superpowers stood "eye ball to eye ball" for thirteen pre-apocalyptic days. But

then, again paradoxically and hopefully, there followed in 1963 the partial Test Ban Treaty. The cold war and arms race, which had started almost at the moment World War II ended, now seemed to experience a let-up. With people like Kennedy, Krushchev and Willy Brandt at the lead, and "Pope John the Good" breathing out on the world a divinely infused air of hope, *détente* was born. SALT I was signed in 1972. And, during the heydays of *détente* in the mid-70s, it looked as though the superpowers were firmly determined to steer the world out of the nuclear danger and into an era of universal peace and co-operation.

But that was not to be. The Soviet Union, which had for long remained the nuclear underdog, and was therefore obliged "to blink first" during the Cuban Missile Crisis, strained every nerve to regain prestige by catching up with the U.S. However we are to judge the U.S. accusation that arms control during the *détente* meant control for them and feverish arms development for the other party, by the end of the seventies the Soviets had confessedly caught up with the Yankees, who (rightly or wrongly) felt betrayed and threatened as never before.

The Soviet SS-20s, a hundred of which, with triple warheads on each, were targeted on Western Europe, frightened the Europeans so much that they sought "protection" through the deployment of the U.S. cruise and Pershing II missiles in Europe, where, apart from a rich crop of short-range "tactical missiles" and nuclear loaded bombers, Britain and France already had their "independent" nuclear forces Demurring at first and after much bureaucratic infighting, it seems, the U.S acceeded to the Europeans' request.

Then the Peace Movements cropped up. All over Europe, but especially in Britain and West Germany, men and, especially women filled the streets, carrying their alarmed and alarming message of the possible nuclear cataclysm and praying and pleading for peace and a halt to the mad nuclear race. They specifically opposed the deployment of the new U.S. weapons in Europe. In Britain the opposition Labour Party and in West Germany then the ruling Socialist Party adopted anti-deployment policies, though in both countries hawkish pro-deployment parties were voted back to or into power with convincing majorities. In every corner of the world, religious leaders, scientists and other prominent people raised their voices in unison, calling for a halt to the nuclear race. The Soviet Union, on one front constantly pushed up its stockpiles, so as not to yield the lead to the Americans, and, on another, led the chorus of peace.

Other things happened alongside. The U.S. suffered military, political and moral humiliation in Vietnam and Laos. The Watergate scandal cost the U.S. presidency prestige and morale. Communists took over Ethiopia and former Western colonies in Africa. The CIA liquidated Chile's President Allende, but elsewhere in Latin America it was less successful, and in Nicaragua, the Marxist-led popular revolutionary forces overthrew the CIA puppet Somoza. In Afghanistan, the Soviet Union engineered a coup and then a second coup, with Soviet troops marching in "at the invitation of the Afghan government". In Poland, the workers and people rose up in non-violent rebellion against the government, demanding basic trade-union and other human rights under the banner of Solidarity The government tolerated the latter for a while, only to crush it, as "capitalist-inspired counter-revolution" In Iran, the CIA man Shah, who guarded the mightiest U.S. outpost in the gulf region, fell to the Khomeini forces, who then brutally turned against the U S. diplomatic personnel and held them hostages for over a year, making the most mighty nation in history look on in helpless agony.

And then came Ronald Reagan, riding the crest of a mighty wave of injured American national pride. Reagan did not have the slightest doubt about what he wanted. He would get the U.S. back to an undisputably number-one position and, with U.S. might, roll back the world tide of communism. Neither did he have any doubts or qualms about his means: free-market economy (letting the mighty dollar to become almighty and leave the poor at home and abroad to ask for quarter where they could) and the sky-rocketing of defence spending to build up the nuclear stockpiles to newer and newer heights.

As was said, the Soviet Union would not meekly accept the position of the underdog. They have made no bones about having achieved a "rough parity" of nuclear forces while, indisputably, they led the West in conventional forces. At no cost would they permit the "rough parity" to be disturbed and their focal concern was the deployment of the cruise and Pershing II missiles, the latter, deployed in Germany, being able to a hit target in Russia within minutes of firing. On the other hand, the dreaded SS-20 remain trained on the heart of Europe, though the Soviets firmly stood by their pledge to "no first use" of a nuclear weapon. The NATO, feeling overwhelmed by the conventional might of the Warsaw-Pact forces, and unwilling or unable to increase its own conventional forces, have persisted in their policy of "flexible response", involving the first use of nuclear weapons in what is hoped will be a "containable" and "winnable" nuclear war. Cherishing no illusions of containing and winning a nuclear war, and dispelling such illusions on the other side, the Soviet Union has assured massive retalitation to any nuclear attack, involving "mutual assured destruction" (MAD) and worse.

Add to this the ideological factor. If the irrepressible Krushchev bragged in the hall of the U.N., "We shall bury you !", meaning the

capitalists, the more urbane and polished leaders who followed him have not concealed their confidence that, with the march of history on its side, socialism will inherit the future through violence and armed struggle, while carefully clarifying that there never was and never will be a question of "exporting the revolution", and pleading that ideological disputes should not be allowed to sour good-neighbourly relations between capitalist and socialist nations. Reagan, who is not a master of such sophisticated thinking, sees nothing but "typical communist doublespeak" in such suave talk and has stuck to his faith that the Soviet Union is the "focus of evil in the modern world", and that communism, whose "last chapter is even now being written" will soon disappear "in the ash heap of history", with his nuclear deterrence lending a helping hand.

The Monster of Nuclear Deterrence

Deterrence is the modern term, translating the old Roman saying, *Si vis pacem, para bellum* (if you want peace, prepare for war). It implies the preparedness to inflict upon the enemy who would attack unacceptable damage in retaliation, fearing which, he would refrain from attacking.

Nuclear deterrence is the post-World War II NATO doctrine After the war, the U.S. emerged as the undisputed leader of the West, alone possessing the nuclear weapon. The Soviet Union, which suffered incalculable war damages along with the rest of Europe and emerged from the war as the ally-turned-enemy-number-one of the West, was still mighty enough in terms of conventional military power to make the West feel threatened The West's *easy* answer to this real or apparent Soviet threat was nuclear deterrence. Deterrence, especially in the absence of mutual trust and dialogue, of course, functions under the intrinsic law of arms race and escalation, because only if "we" possess the capability to inflict "unacceptable damage in retaliation", can deterrence be credible, and so, both sides must compete to "catch up with" or "keep ahead of" "them".

Nuclear deterrence worked well enough for the West as long as the Soviet Union remained way behind on the nuclear track. But once it more or less caught up in the race, deterrence began to show itself as a vicious circle. Deterrence has the inbuilt mechanism for escalation. The ever-increasing accumulation of monstrously destructive weapons and the feverish quest for even more destructive and sophisticated ones proportionately multiplies the danger of an all-destructive war breaking out even by accident, especially in the absence of mutual trust and communication. But even if war is prevented,

the arms race forces the diversion of immense amounts of scarce resources from where they are most needed to provide the poorest millions with the barest necessities of life.[2] Hence the anguished quest of people concerned for humanity and even the mere future of our planet for ways and means to find an end to the nuclear arms race.

Approaches to the Question of Disarmament

The Reaganite thesis is that the U.S., burdened with the responsibility to defend the "free and democratic" world and "Western values", and, of course, U.S. economic and political interests in every part of the world, has lost the convincing nuclear superiority it had once enjoyed and therefore it is categorically imperative to make up for the loss in the shortest possible time and then, from a "position of strength", negotiate a "credible" arms control and reduction.

It is not that Americans generally share Reagan's tale of the "already lost" race. What Reagan really wants, according to general world opinion probably shared by the majority of Americans themselves,[3] is to regain U.S. lost nuclear dominance — an intrinsically vicious and absurd proposition, given the nature of the race and Soviet determination to be in the race as long as it lasts.

The Soviet position is that it deeply deplores the arms race forced upon it by the U.S. and NATO. It has not only championed the cause of nuclear arms reduction as well as the total banning of nuclear weapons consistently on all forums, but has also, unilaterally and consistently, renounced the right to "first use" of a nuclear weapon. But since it cannot afford to remain the underdog, especially with U.S. leadership vowed to "roll back the tide of communism" through any means, it will never more concede lead to the U.S. in the nuclear race but is prepared to stake everything to keep abreast. Without wanting to "export revolution" or bring about world socialism by the might

2 Defence spending is computed in figures which are astronomic. The layman can gather some idea about it and its human cost from what Economist J D Smith writes "During the next few months, if 11 7 million tonnes of food is not mad available to 24 of the 50 odd African nations, quite a few millions will either die of starvation or suffer from prolonged malnutrition and permanent physical and mental damage The cost of this much-needed supply is not more than dollars 100 millions, as against dollars 1,700 millions spent everyday in what is known as defence" (*Indian Express*, 16 February 1984).

3. *Time* has it: "Despite President Reagan's alarmism about the Soviets' across-the-board 'margin of superiority', the U.S. and the Soviet Union are in a relationship variously described as parity, rough equivalence, or 'offsetting asymmetries'. The Soviets are ahead in some categories, while the U.S. is ahead in others" (April 18, 1983, p 13).

Significantly, too, the U.S. House of Representatives voted in May 1983 a non-binding resolution, 278 to 149, calling for a nuclear arms freeze by the U.S. and the U.S.S.R., "a measure opposed by the Reagan administration" (*Time*, May 16, 1983, p. 33).

of its weapons, it has necessarily to remain in the race, because it and its fraternal socialist countries are mortally threatened by the arms in the capitalist arsenals. It does not seek nuclear superiority, but will not cede the hard-won parity.

I dare not judge the controversy around the Soviet SS-20s and the U S cruise and Pershing II weapons, which has caused the truly ominous breakdown of every arms-reduction negotiation — INF, START and MBFR.[4] The nature of the issues is not such as to help easy judgments even by experts. The circumstance that the Warsaw-Pact states are all conglomerated on the same land mass, shared by one half of NATO, with the other and mightier half separated by thousands of miles of ocean adds to the complexity of the issues. Another complication is created by the factor that, while the Soviet side takes the entire responsibility for the Warsaw-Pact, the U.S. cannot touch the "independent" nuclear forces of the "sovereign" states of Britain and France. Both sides, of course, agree on the principles of "equality and equal security" for all and "mutually balanced force reduction", and accuse each other of wanting to impose a unilateral reduction What beats the comprehension of an outsider, at any rate, is the U S insistence that the Soviet Union should discount in the negotiations the "independent" British and French missiles, targeted or easily targetable against the Soviet Union and other Warsaw-Pact states.

The Soviet Union has walked off the negotiations table on the ground that the deployment of the new U.S. missiles has "upset" the rough parity which existed, as evidenced by SALT II agreement. Reagan's reply to this is that SALT II was "fatally flawed", in that the deadly SS-20, which technically belonged to the INF category, was not covered by SALT II and that the Soviet Union has been deploying that weapon all through the post-SALT II years, thus upsetting whatever balance existed at the time of the signing of SALT II (1979). Again, surprisingly for the outsider, neither side speaks of the restoration of *status quo* of 1979 as pre-condition for the resumption of negotiations. Reagan wants the deployment of the 572 new U S weapons to be accepted as part of the talks package with the Soviet Union, which wants the restoration of *status quo ante* deployment — incidentally, the *status quo* at the start of the INF negotiations — for the resumption of talks. Are both sides, possibly, under some deadly fascination for their new brands of weapons, as representing the ultimate achievement of their national and ideological genius ?

4. Intermediate-range Nuclear Forces, Strategic Arms Reduction Talks, Mutually Balanced Forces Reduction.

In any case, the present situation of bilateral upward arming, with every negotiation broken off, is, it seems, potentially even more dangerous than that which existed during the Cuban Missile Crisis. At that time, it was not only the relative Soviet weakness, but also the humanity of men like Krushchev and Kennedy and the pleadings of such universally respected figures as Bertrand Russel and Pope John XXIII, which helped the resolution of the crisis. Today's combination of coldly calculating managers— significantly, *Time* had a "Machine of the Year" to start 1983 with—and revivalist religious leaders can only add to the poignancy of the sense of tragedy.

But, maybe, here is the special importance of the "unilateralist" Peace Movements. Unilateralism is, by and large, a West European phenomenon—in the East, except in East Germany, the states have claimed the ambivalent monopoly of pacifism with arms race. Unilateralist thinking represents a wide range. While some unilateralists can tolerate no thought of nuclear weapons, what the generality of them seek is an effective end to the arms race, for which they want the West to take, even unilaterally, confidence-building first steps. They also do not believe that the situation before the cruise and Pershing II deployment was one of dangerous nuclear imbalance. As E. P. Thompson, one of the most prominent and articulate unilateralist spokesmen, wrote, "What is at issue is not unilateral disarmament but a halt to one-sided upward arming".[5]

The Unilateralists are not chicken-hearted cowards or naive "April-fools of the Kremlin", as is sometimes sought to be made out. They believe that if the use of the nuclear weapon is immoral and non-permissible under any circumstance, consequently and equally immoral and non-permissible are their production. deployment and intention to use, whether in a "first strike" or as "last resort". Motivated by their Christian or humanist faith, they believe that there is an absolute limit even to the retaliatory use of violence and that this limit will be crossed by any use of the nuclear weapon. They believe, also, that "tyrannies do not last for ever. They come and go. But this world is the only one we have got".[6] And therefore, while they do not see any actual and immediate Soviet-Communist threat to the West, they would be "Red rather than dead," if the worst comes to the worst. On the other hand they do see an actual and immediate threat to European and, indeed, world security, in the deployment of the new U.S. weapons in Europe, and, therefore, they are prepared even "to break the law non-violently in order to say 'no' to the posses-

5. *The Tablet*, 22 October 1983, p. 1023.
6. Phillip KNIGHTLEY in (Indian) *Express Magazine*, 1 January, 1984.

sion and planned use of nuclear weapons, in order actively to resist the nuclear war machine, and as a sign of faithful allegiance to Jesus Christ and his Gospel of justice, love and peace".[7]

The Indian Perspective

As noted in the beginning, in the nuclear age no country can consider questions of arms race and disarmament as of no or little concern to itself. But there are also other specific factors which must come into the Indian perspective of the nuclear question.

India is a so-called middlepower, with the fourth largest army in the world and, however modestly nuclear-weapons capable — according to Western analysts India has become a crypto-nuclear-weapons power, like South Africa and Israel. India has refused to sign the evidently senseless and discriminatory Non-Proliferation Treaty, as allowing unbounded proliferation so the great nuclear powers, who would provide a nuclear "umbrella" for their allies and satellites only, leaving the non-aligned states deprived of their right to take care of their defence and exposed to nuclear-power bullying and blackmail.

On our North there is the superpower Soviet Union, on the North-East, nuclear China, and, on the North-West, nuclear-capable Pakistan. The nuclear might of the Soviet Union poses no threat to India (at least psychologically), because Indo-Soviet relations have been warm and friendly throughout and there is no dispute between the two countries that could at all develop into belligerency. Indo-Chinese relations started very cordially, but went bitter when the Chinese army massively marched into disputed territory this side of the border, at a time when India least expected such an eventuality. Even after the cease-fire, the chill remained as long as Mao lived. With the new Chinese regime, some thaw has come into the relations, but not to the degree that they can be called friendly. In any case, with the disputed territory under Chinese occupation and India being in no mood to go to war to reclaim it, China's nuclear system poses no immediate and direct threat to India.

Thus, in terms of security analysis, Pakistan remains the only quarter from where a threat could come to this country. True, after 1948, 1965 and, especially, 1971, Pakistan cannot sanely contemplate war against India. Pakistan has repeatedly declared its intention to abide by the Simla Pact, stipulating negotiated solutions to outstanding disputes, including the one about Kashmir. Further still, in recent times, Pakistan has, again repeatedly, offerred to sign a no-war pact

7. *The Examiner* (Bombay), 13 April, 1983, p. 280.

with India, in response to India's grave concern regarding its acquisition of U.S. weapons.

On the other hand, Indian security analysts see Pakistan clearly over-arming itself with the latest available U.S. weapons and with the most generous flow of Saudi funds. According to these analysts, massive inductions of new weapons into Pakistan were always occasions for surprise attacks on India. Moreover, it is feared that Pakistan is very close to exploding its "Islamic bomb", which had been Bhutto's avowed goal. Pakistan, of course, cites the possible Soviet threat, seeing that the Soviet Union is none too reassuringly embroiled in a war of attrition in Afghanistan, and Pakistan has become the home for millions of Afghan refugees, who are also the backbone and base of the anti-Soviet guerilla warfare in Afghanistan. True, Pakistan stands no chance in a war with the Soviet Union but its resistance capability to a Soviet invasion will, no doubt, be appreciably enhanced by its better defence preparedness. As for its nuclear project, Pakistan, like India, vows that its objectives are purely peaceful uses of the nuclear energy, though, as a matter of fact, neither country commands credibility for such vows and protestations.

For all practical purposes, therefore, there obtains on the subcontinent a situation of an arms race of appreciable (and in view of the abject poverty of the majority of our populations, indeed, monstrous) proportions, with a distinct crypto-nuclear content. India would deter a surprise Pakistani attack, compounded with nuclear blackmail and covert U.S. support, while Pakistan fears that India, with its evidently greater might and with clandestine Soviet support, would attack to bring about its further dismemberment. It should be observed, also, that a gulf separates the government and opposition perceptions of mutual threat from India and Pakistan. The oppositions, as well as independent media, with considerable credibility, accuse their respective governments of making much too much of threat from across the border for no other purpose than to further selfish power-political ends.

There are, of course, nuclear-weapons lobbies in this country. Among those who favour India's going frankly nuclear, at whatever economic and social costs, are not only those who dread the "Islamic bomb" but also others, like K. Subramanyam, Director of the Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi, whose vision is much wider. According to Subramanyam, in a world of such complexity and all sorts of rivalries, connected with the quest of hegemony and "spheres of influence", it is not only desirable but necessary for peace and security the world over that the superpowers and their allies should not

be allowed to enjoy the monopoly of nuclear weapons power and that nuclear-capable middle powers, like India, Pakistan, Brazil and Argentina should also have their own modest nuclear-weapons arsenals Given its prospects, a nuclear war between the superpowers is unthinkable, but it is not so unthinkable in this age of "gun-boat diplomacy" and "rapid-deployment forces" that the superpowers, who have ensured their nuclear-weapons monopoly through the NPT, pose the threat of subtle and not-so-subtle nuclear blackmail to other nations who would not meekly acknowledge their hegemonic pretentions. Given such a situation, it will be only helpful for over-all peace and security if some of the middle powers, outside the two power blocs, have some credible nuclear defence capacity.[8]

On the other hand, there are thoughtful people who argue that it will be in the best interest of India to sign the NPT, even if it is unfair and discriminatory, and bring our nuclear programme within the ambit of international inspection. This will both reassure those who fear India's nuclear capability and help our pursuing the peaceful uses of nuclear energy with assistance from countries with more developed nuclear technologies. Others plead that, even if we should refuse to sign the NPT, as a matter of principle, we should sign a no-nuclear-weapons pact with Pakistan, both sides agreeing to mutual inspection and verification.[9]

Voices in the Wilderness

In this section, I shall be chiefly concerned with the statements of the leaders of the Catholic Church, briefly mentioning also other prophetic voices.

The U S. National Bishops' Conference's "Peace Pastoral" is well known to have made history. There are also half a dozen or so other such statements which deserve mention. Before coming to these, however, we need to consider briefly the Vatican II doctrine on war, arms race and disarmament, which forms the basis of episcopal statements

To begin with, it must be noted that the Council's doctrine is almost a reproduction of that of Pope John XXIII's peace encyclical. *Pacem in Terris*, prepared by the Pope with his death in sight and issued on Maundy Thursday 1963, very much as a last will and testa-

8 *Gandhi Marg*. Journal of the Gandhi Peace Foundation, Special Issue on Disarmament and Human Survival, May-June 1982, pp. 239-253.

9. Cf. e.g., Rajmohan GANDHI, "India, Pakistan, and the Bomb: A Question of Credibility", *ibid*, pp. 379-382, also, B G VERGHESE, "Indian Options in Disarmament, "*ibid*., pp. 392-397.

ment and (for the first time in the case of a papal document) addressed "to all men of good will".[10]

Proposing to approach the question of war, whose destructive capacity has been unimaginably multiplied, with "an entirely new attitude (*The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World* [GS] 80), the Council uses uncharacteristically forthright and strong language (all the more striking in *The Pastoral Constitution*) to condemn total war. Making its own "the condemnations of total war pronounced by recent popes", the Council declares — with nuclear weapons certainly in view: "An act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas with their populations is a crime against God and man himself It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation" (80). It can hardly be doubted that this "unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation" covers any use, actual or intentional, of nuclear weapons, whether "first" or in retaliation, whether "tactical" or "strategic".

Clearly implying unmitigated scepticism about nuclear deterrence, the Council warns that warfare with "modern scientific weapons" provides their possessors with "a kind of occasion to commit just such abominations. Moreover, through a certain inexorable chain of events, it can urge men on to the most attrocious decisions" (*ibid.*). The Council is, therefore, concerned about the almost intrinsic evil of the nuclear weapons. Hence, in the gravest tone, expressing keenest solicitude, "the bishops of the whole world, in unity assembled, beg all men, especially government officials and military leaders, to give unremitting thought to the awesome responsibility which is theirs before God and the entire human race" (*ibid.*). Turning to military personnel, the Council declares that "blind obedience cannot excuse" those who carry out commands in violation of "universal moral principles" (79).

Deploring the "balance of terror", implied in deterrence and condeming the arms race both for its potential danger to the human race and the enormous sums of money it consumes, depriving the poorest of their basic life-necessities, the Council warns: "the arms race is an utterly treacherous trap to humanity, and one which injures the poor to an intolerable degree. It is much to be feared that if this race persists, it will eventually spawn all the lethal ruin whose path it is now making ready" (81).

10. Cf. Peter HEBBLETHWAITE, "Light from Pope John", *The Tablet*, 16 April 1983, p. 147f.; also, *id.*, "Pope John and His Critics", *ibid.*, 4 June 1983, pp. 521f.

And so, the Council again stresses the necessity of "new approaches initiated by reformed attitudes" (81); for "peace must be born of *mutual trust between nations rather than imposed on them through fear of one another's weapons*" (82). Peace cannot be pursued "so *long as feelings of hostility*, contempt and distrust, as well as racial hatreds and unbending ideologies, continue to divide men and place them in opposing camps" (82). Finally, with characteristic hope, the Council looks forward to a time "when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent" and when "some international public authority acknowledged as such by all, and endowed with sufficient power to safeguard, on behalf of all, security, regard for justice, and respect for rights" (*ibid*) can be established.

The Pastoral Letter of the American bishops, *The Challenge of Peace: God's Promise and Our Response*, is a unique and deservedly famous document I shall only make a few points and highlight some of the most important aspects of its doctrinal content.[11]

The Peace Pastoral is a long (45,000 words) document. It was prepared in the course of two years of intense work and all-round dialogue. Three drafts were circulated and widely discussed, not only in theological, ecclesial and ecumenical, but also in the highest political and administrative circles. President Reagan is said to have been so concerned about its possible negative impact on his nuclear policy, that he sent a special messenger to request the Pope to use his influence on the bishops to tone down their criticisms, though the Pope, apparently, not only refused to oblige, but, by elevating Archbishop Bernardine of Chicago, Chairman of the Pastoral's drafting committee, to the cardinalate, also positively indicated his support of the Pastoral's contents The Pastoral drafts were not only widely discussed, but also sharply contradicted by prominent Catholic laymen, who went so far as to question the bishops' right to butt in with their theological and ethical concerns into the sanctum of high technology and strategy The bishops stood their ground and issued the Pastoral, which they had passed by a vote of 238 to 9, directly opposing the Administration's and NATO'S policies on more points than one, when they said 'No' to the idea of nuclear war, effectively declared the "first strike" and deterrence doctrines immoral, and called for an immediate halt to the nuclear race by the U.S. and U.S.S.R. But they also clarified that they were not propounding binding doctrine, but offering the guidance necessary for each one's responsible formation of conscience.

---

11. I draw on the "substance" of the Pastoral, printed in *The Tablet*, 4 June 1983, pp. 526-536. Numbers in parentheses refer to this issue.

The bishops take their stand firmly on the ground of the Council, whose spirit ey palpably breathe out. They own up the special responsibility of the United tates, "the nation which was first to produce atomic weapons, which has been the nly one to use them, and which today is one of the handful of nations capable of ecisively influencing the course of the nuclear age" (526) They refuse belief in the IATO doctrine of a "containable' and "winnable" nuclear war and in the policy f 'flexible response", involving the option of "first use", because "we do not erceive any situation in which the deliberate initiation of nuclear warfare, on however restricted a scale, can be morally justified" (528) Aiming their volley directly t the White House and the Pentagon they call for "clear public resistance to the hetoric of 'winnable' nuclear wars, or unrealistic expectations of 'surviving' nuclear xchanges, strategies of 'protracted nuclear war'" (*ibid*) Recalling a study of the 'atican's Pontifical Academy of Sciences, they express their conviction that the evil f a nuclear war has no other remedy than prevention.

The bishops deplore the anomaly of "*billions readily spent for destructive in*truments while pitched battles are waged daily in our legislatures over much smaller mounts for the homeless, the hungry, and the helpless here and abroad" (*ibid.*)

Deterrence reflects and is based on "the radical distrust which marks internaional politics" (529). However, taking the actual situation into consideration and ot concealing the paradox of their position (and leaving it to the readers to get their neaning), they resign themselves to "a strictly conditioned moral acceptance" of eterrence. *The conditions are, an unqualified* "No" *to the idea of nuclear war and* o "the quest for nuclear superiority", and also that deterrence should be a step oward disarmament (530).

Recalling the success of President Kennedy's initiatives and conciliatory first teps after the Cuban missile crisis, leading to the Soviet reciprocation and the signg of the Test Ban Treaty of 1963, the bishops say: "While we do not advocate a olicy of unilateral disarmament, we believe the urgent need for control of the arms ace *requires a willingness for each side to take some first steps*" (531). *They* mphasize the necessity to rise above ideological differences, because "the urgent ractical needs for co-operative efforts in the human interest overrules these differnces" (534) While refusing to equate their country with the Soviet Union and ranting that "Soviet behaviour in some cases merits the adjective reprehensible", ey stress that the "Soviet people and their leaders are human beings created in the nage and likeness of God To believe that we are condemned in the future only o what has been the past of U.S. Soviet relations is to underestimate both our human otential for creative diplomacy and God's action in our midst which can open the vay to changes we could barely imagine" (*ibid.*).

Finally, once again giving expression to their apprehension that "our world and ation are headed in the wrong direction", they call for support of the United Nations nd the creation of "truly effective international authority". Drawing upon their Christian hope, and with their feet firmly on the earth, the bishops conclude: "We annot build a perfect world, but we can, a better one" (536).

As was noted, the pastoral was sharply criticized by prominent and representative members of the Catholic laity and criticism sounded not only surprising but also ominous notes. Twenty-four Catholic Congress-men declared their opposition to the pastoral, whose unequivocal "No" to the idea of nuclear war they found "misplaced", because "however gruesome modern weaponry might become", the real threat

which the Americans should be concerned with "is not embodied in weapons", "the real threat comes from an ideology". They would not fight ideology with counter ideology, but would rather have a crusade of nuclear weapons versus ideology.[12] An engineer, working with the shipyards which build the latest Trident submarines, declared in words requiring no comments: "Unfortunately, our main enemy is an atheist country. I don't care what God's words are. They've got to listen to something that is meaningful to them — our deterrent force".[13] Catholic philosophers, like Michael Novak and Robert Mc-Inerny, reacted with "proper resentment" to what they perceived as the renewed clerical threat and the clerics' encroachment upon the layman's "proper field of competence".[14] It seems, therefore, that, as in the days of the proper Crusades, the "Christian" knights would recapture the burial ground of their dead "God" with the might of their arms and not care for the words of that God (who was dead anyway), these modern-day crusaders against atheistic communism would defend a helpless and hapless "God" with the might of their deterrent force.

A number of European Catholic Bishops' Conferences also issued pastorals on the nuclear question during 1983. From what can be gathered from reports,[15] they add hardly anything to the thought content of the American pastoral. Only the Irish bishops add a distinct new dimension when they frankly state that the present arms stockpile "far exceed any rational estimate of what deterrence requires". For deterrence requires not more than the ability to inflict unacceptable damage, and not weapons superiority or even equality.[16] As for the positions, they vary from that of the Dutch and Irish bishops, which is almost identical with that of the U.S. bishops, to that of the French and German bishops, which almost coincides with that of their respective governments. The German bishops stress the danger of communism, while their French colleagues that of pacifism. None of the European pastorals took a stand on the concrete question of the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles, except that of the bishops of England and Wales, which expressed deep scepticism regarding it.

As regards non-Catholic churches, most of them either supported the stand of their Catholic colleagues or adopted similar stands, except,

12. *The Tablet*, 8 January 1983, p. 20
13. *The Tablet*, 28 May 1983, p 496.
14 *The Tablet*, 12 February 1983, pp 126-127.
15. Cf. *The Tablet*, 29 January 1983, pp 92ff ; 7 May 1983, pp. 434; 9 July 1983, p. 664, 1 October 1983, p. 956, 19 November 1983, p. 1132 and 26 November 1983, p. 1158 See, also, *The Examiner*, 20 August 1983, p. 532.
16. *The Examiner*, 20 August 1983, p. 532.

significantly, the General Synod of the Anglican Church, which, by a vote, 387 to 49, rejected unilateral disarmament and accepted deterrence, though rejecting, at the same time, the option of "first use".[17]

The Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches, meeting at Vancouver, Canada, 24 July to 10 August 1983, gave pride of place to the deliberations on questions of the nuclear arms race. The first and longest of its official Statements is "The Statement on Peace and Justice".[18]

The Assembly entertains no illusions, of course, about its power to influence the course of events. It knows that the churches' opposition will not make nuclear arms disappear. "But it will involve the churches and their members in a fundamental examination of their own implicit or explicit support of policies which, implicitly or explicitly, are based on the possession and use of these weapons" (25). "Christians cannot view the dangers of this moment as inherent in the nature of things. Nor can we give ourselves to despair" (*ibid.*). Hence, "with a deep sense of pastoral responsibility" and aware that it will be no simple matter for any Christian or church to live up to the convictions expressed here; and therefore without implying condemnation or judgement on any one, but "calling upon the churches to support one another in love as in these ways we seek together to be faithful to our common calling" (27), the Assembly addresses itself to the question

"Humanity is now living in the shadow of an arms race more intense and of systems of injustice more widespread more dangerous and more costly than the world has ever known. Never before has the human race been as close as it is now to total self-destruction. Never before have so many lived in the grip of deprivation and oppression" (1). With palpable anguish and without mincing words, the Assembly warns that "the frantic race towards nuclear conflagration has accelerated sharply. A moment of madness, a miscalculated strategic adventure, a chance combination of computer errors, a misperception of the other's intention, an honest mistake— any one could now set off a nuclear holocaust" (3) Nuclear weapons are deadly even in the absence of war "through the lasting effects of nuclear bombing, weapons testing and the dumping of nuclear waste" (4). "While the equivalent of two billion dollars (US) is being expended globally each year for armaments, the world economy is engulfed in a prolonged and deepening crisis which threatens every country and international security"(7).

The Assembly draws "*special attention to the United Nations' International Year of Peace' (1986) and the 'World Disarmament Campaign', urging the churches to use them as important opportunities for the strengthening of international security and the promotion of disarmament, peace and justice*" (14)

Noting that "since our last Assembly [Nairobi, 1975], global military expenditures have tripled," the Assembly make its own the earlier appeal of the WCC Central Committee to the churches with respect to the following. "a) a nuclear war can under no circumstance, in no region and under no system be just or justifiable, given the

17. *Time*, February 21, 1983, p. 44.

18. "Statements by the WCC Sixth Assembly— Vancouver, Canada, 24 July to 10 August 1983", *The Ecumenical Review*, January 1984, pp 82-105—pp. 82-87, "The Statement on Peace and Justice". Figures in parenthesis refer to numbers in the latter Statement; emphases are of the text.

fact that the magnitude of devastation caused by it will be far out of proportion to to any conceivable benefit or advantage to be derived from it, b) nuclear war is unlikely to remain limited, and therefore any contemplation of 'limited' use of nuclear weapons should be discouraged as dangerous from the outset; ... c) all nations now possessing nuclear weapons or capable of doing so in the foreseeable future should unequivocally renounce policies of 'First use', as an immediate step towards building confidence, d) the concept of deterrence, the credibility of which depends on the possible use of nuclear weapons, is to be rejected as morally unacceptable and as incapable of safeguarding peace and security in the long term, e) the production and development of nuclear weapons as well as their use constitute a crime against humanity, and therefore there should be a complete halt in the production of nuclear weapons research and development in all nations, to be expeditiously enforced through a treaty, f) all nations should agree to and ratify a comprehensive test-ban treaty as a necessary step to stopping the further development of nuclear weapons technology ." (20)

The churches should "press their governments to abstain from any further research, production and deployment of weapons in space, and to prohibit the development and production of all weapons of mass destruction or indiscriminate effect, including chemical and biological means" (21)

Convinced that nuclear weapons must be considered within the category of weapons forbidden in terms of the 1980 Geneva Convention, owing to their indiscriminate effect, the Assembly emphatically reiterates the conviction of the Panel of the WCC Public Hearing on Nuclear Weapons and Disarmament: "*We believe that the time has come when the churches must unequivocally declare that the production and deployment as well as the use of nuclear weapons are a crime against humanity and that such activities must be condemned on ethical and theological grounds*" (25) Hence the Assembly solemnly urges the churches "*to press their governments, especially in those countries which have nuclear weapons capabilities, to elaborate and ratify an international instrument which would outlaw as a crime against humanity the possession as well as the use of nuclear weapons*" (*ibid.*).

None of the groups of church leaders seems to have taken a stand formally and directly in regard to the popular anti-nuclear Peace Movements. The U S. pastoral, as we saw, called for first steps in view of reciprocation, without favouring unilateral disarmament, while the German and French bishops implicitly criticized the Peace movements, as they stressed the danger of communism and pacifism. In England, a most dynamic and articulate Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament resolutely opposing the government and NATO nuclear policies, is led by its charismatic general secretary, Monsignor Bruce Kent. Kent was bitterly criticized by Archbishop Bruno Heim, Pro-Nuncio in Britain, while Cardinal Hume, with whose permission Kent had taken over the CND leadership, has stood by him, even though the Cardinal has certain reservations in regard to the CND.[19]

Not to be bypassed is the Third Congress of the movement of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, held in

19. Cf. *The Tablet*, 14 May 1983, p. 460, and 21 May 1983, p. 488.

Amsterdam in 1983, and attended by physicians from 31 countries, including the U.S. and U.S.S.R. The appeal of the Congress, addressed to Yuri Andropov and Ronald Reagan reads in part:

"We believe that:

— all nuclear powers should unequivocally agree to refrain from the use of nuclear weapons in any conflict. The unleashing of nuclear conflict would be tantamount to both genocide and national suicide;

— all powers should agree to a sufficiently verifiable freeze of the development, testing, production and deployment of nuclear weapons and their means of delivery;

— the freeze should then be followed by a reduction and eventual elimination of nuclear weapons from the arsenals of all nations;

— the negotiations currently in progress should be carried out persistently, with good will and with consideration for the interests of both sides. . ."[20]

Last, but not least, the Non-Alligned Movement and the United Nations General Assembly, have consistently called for nuclear test freeze, the banning of the nuclear war and the prevention of the militarization of outer space.

But one voice which has not been articulately and distinctly present in this quasi-universal chorus of peace is that of Pope John Paul II. The Pope did indeed indicate his support to the U S. bishops' Peace Pastoral, but he also sent a message to the 1982 United Nations Second Special Session on Disarmament, in which he expressed his concern about the nuclear arms race and said: "In current conditions 'deterrence', based on balance, certainly not an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable". This is a positive and, however qualified, *not conditioned*, endorsement of deterrence. This endorsement becomes still more positive, though still implicit, in the following statement, reported by *Time*, which with evident satisfaction, found that "despite its reputation for political chaos, Italy has been remarkably serene and sure about accepting its quota of 112 Tomahawks": "Dialogue calls for reciprocity. . . In the progressive reduction of armaments, nuclear or conventional, the parties must be equally involved and together travel the various stages of disarmament".[21]

The 1983 Bishops' Synod, with the theme "reconciliation", which theme was likewise that of the Holy Year 1983-84, hardly touched the nuclear question. In their message "To the Church and the World",

20. *International Affairs*, October 1983, p. 80.
21. *Time*, January 31, 1983, p. 9.

the bishops said, rather blandly: "The Church will work to heal the divisions and tensions of the world. We shall be tireless in the search for peace and disarmament and the reduction of tension particularly between East and West. We have no political power but we can voice to the leaders of states the anxious longing of their people for a safer, more peaceful world".[22] And the Pope said in his final address to the Synod: "During these days I have sent a pressing appeal to the presidents of the United States and the Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union, asking them not to turn away from negotiation as the only way to repair differences and the conflicts of interests and to put an end to the arms race, which keeps the whole of contemporary humanity in apprehension".[23]

What one misses sadly in such statements is the deep and palpable concern, the urgency and the clarity of Vatican II, the U.S. Peace Pastoral and other such documents we have presented. This consideration becomes the more disturbing when we consider that the Synod met during the days when the Geneva Talks were evidently heading for a breakdown, because of the induction of the new U.S missiles to Europe, in spite of repeated Soviet warnings not to disturb the *status quo* at the start of the negotiation.

It may be accidental that the position that both the deploymen and talks should go on parallelly coincided with the U.S. position. But one should be forgiven if one cannot get off one's mind a certain comparison between this situation and that of Germany under Hitler, when the Popes Pius XI and Pius XII failed to raise their prophetic voices clearly, distinctly and loudly against anti-Semitism, though the Holy See did indeed much to help the victims of anti-Semitism The least the Synod and the Pope could have done, one feels, is to reaffirm Vatican II's "unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation' of nuclear warfare and to call upon all states to renounce the option of the "first use" of nuclear weapons.

---

22. *The Tablet*, 5 November 1983, p. 1089.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 1090. It should be noted that the British Council of Churches, at their meeting of 22 November 1983, denounced nuclear weapons as "an offence to God and a denial of his purpose for man". It called for a nuclear freeze in Europe and demanded that Britain and France abandon their independent nuclear forces and that these should be taken into account in "relevant East-West disarmament negotiations" (*The Tablet*, 3 December 1983, p. 1184.).

Natural Family Planning National Development Programme in India

Dr M. M. MASCARENHAS*

1. *Brief History*

THE first Natural Family Planning (NFP) clinic in India was established in 1966 in St Martha's Hospital, Bangalore, with the collaboration of St John's Medical College. The two departments concerned were that of Preventive and Social Medicine, now known as Community-Medicine of which I was the Head, and the Department of Obstetrics and Gynaecology The clinic was opened in response to requests for a method of NFP and the increasingly felt need that Family Planning should be part of the services provided in a hospital. We have to give credit to Dr James Tong S.J. who was instrumental in encouraging this work.

In 1972 the Christian Medical Association of India (CMAI) came forward and made a grant of Rs 20,000 to the clinic, in order to have more research done and services available in the line of the NFP methods, in which they too were interested, along with all the other methods of Family Planning that they provided. This grant was the beginning of serious planning of more work in this field, and it is significant that the grant was given by a Protestant organization.

In 1972 Dr M. M. Mascarenhas was invited to make a major presentation at the National Convention of Catholic Hospitals at Mangalore, and this really led to an awakening of administrators, superiors, doctors and nurses of hundreds of hospitals and health institutions to the idea that NFP deserved to be considered more seriously, and to be an integral part of the services hospitals offered.

The first book on NFP was printed by the Christian Medical Association of India and 7,000 copies distributed to every Christian hospital and dispensary in the country. The Catholic Hospital Association

*Dr M. M. Mascarenhas is the Director of CREST, Centre for Research Education Service and Training for Family Life Promotion, 14, High Street, Bangalore.

ordered a few thousand copies more and a second edition had to be made Thus a wide information on NFP went out from 1972 onwards In 1974 the visit of Dr Kevin Hume and of the Drs Billings and their team to various parts of India aroused great interest.

A Serious Start

In 1975, in collaboration with World Health Organization, the most detailed research ever done in the study of the Ovulation Method was started in five countries, Bangalore being the centre for India (copies of the study are available here). This WHO study, a research effort of high calibre, cannot be ignored. The Natural Family Planning Association of India of which I had the privilege of being the Founder President was established in the hope that it would provide a liaison between various agents and a co-ordination with Family Planning Programmes of the Government.

The Emergency situation in India gave a fillip to NFP and the Indo-German Social Service Society played a heroic role in financing NFP programmes over sixty dioceses. In Bangalore itself we trained over 10,000 teachers from India and Sri Lanka.

The CBCI Commission for the Family and Laity, of which I was a member since its inception, from 1970 to 1981, and in charge of the Department of Responsible Parenthood, played a significant role in the starting of Family Welfare/Life Centres all over India. This was done by means of regional programme held all over the country. Competent persons were brought together for talks, discussions and audio-visual presentations on Family Life Education, Marriage Preparation, NFP etc and much literature started to be produced in English and in Indian languages. It was these regional programmes that produced the NFP leaders of today.

Soon it became clear that: 1) We could not and should not limit ourselves to Catholic audiences 2) Participation of Government and Voluntary agencies was essential for NFP to spread. 3) The acceptability and effectiveness of NFP was of a significantly high order. 4) Much depended on the attitude of the teacher and the motivation of the couples. 5) Supportive services like Family Life Education and Marriage Preparation were essential for NFP, which must be introduced to young people around the ages of 18-21. These youths must hear the good news so that when they have the need to delay their first child, or to space and finally to limit the progeny, their knowledge would stand them in good stead. Moreover they will feel safe in accepting a method projected to them as compatible with the

ideology of togetherness and sharing in marriage, and offering positive family values with effectiveness.

2. *CREST: Centre for Research Education Service and Training*

In the meantime *Crest* was formally established in 1975 with the objective of co-ordinating with other voluntary organizations and the Government in the area of:

1. Family life and population education.
2. Promotion of NFP by research, education, service and training of personnel.
3. Promotion of respect for life.
4. Special programmes for students.

To avoid duplication of work *Crest* has established contact with other agencies. I shall mention here those which are directly or indirectly involved with NFP.

1 *Participation in Women's Forums*

A large potential is found in women's organizations. After all, as the Chinese say, "half of heaven is held by women". With women, the entry point is the "child's well-being and quality of life", and NFP can be introduced not just as a method of Family Planning but as part of a whole programme, including breast feeding for spacing, health, etc.

Crest has been associated with the following organizations through which major presentations and talks on NFP have been delivered in various parts of India and abroad:

a. The World Union of Catholic Women's Organization (WUCWO), representing 70 million women, which had a workshop in June 1983, in Canada. NFP services were proposed and adopted for inclusion in Government programmes of Canada, the United States of America and Australia.

b. The Council of Catholic Women in India.

c. The Methodist organization of women which met recently at a National Family Consultation, and whose President attended a Training Programme of *Crest*.

d. The Protestant Christian Medical Association of India, which has been contacted and several of whose pastors in theological colleges have undergone training in NFP, with their wives.

e. Other women's social and service organizations have also been exposed to NFP.

I feel that human values with which NFP is so richly endowed, are the rightful heritage of all people, and exclusively Catholic programmes lack the potential for wider acceptance, even amongst Catholics themselves.

2. *At the University Level*

The integration of NFP in the disciplines of Family Life Education and Value Education has been gaining ground at the University level. After several years of spade work, the University of Mangalore has established, with a Government grant, a Department of Family Life Education. A similar programme is under way in Bangalore University with whose Department of Social Work I was associated. NFP has a meaningful place in programmes on Sexuality. Especially today when youth are increasingly misinformed and frustrated, a well-presented programme in Family Life Values deserves careful preparation.

I am glad to say that three boards of higher education in India have been exposed to NFP: The Regional Government Board of Education; The Xavier Board which affiliates over 125 colleges in India, and the All India Association for Christian Higher Education, an ecumenical body which has co-sponsored the publication of the book *Family Life Education* These three boards invite *Crest* representatives to their committees and to their consultations and conferences. In fact, with the help of these boards *Crest* has promoted NFP in the North and North-Eastern parts of India in a significant way.

University students constitute an important section of the population by reason of their articulated views and their potential for the future. They are one of the most satisfying groups to work with In Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta, the North East and several other places of India, students have been introduced to NFP through the Family Life and Population Education Programmes. The charts and books that are sold and the letters we get later are an indication of the great interest aroused in these students. Here indeed is a field we can enter with confidence and satisfaction.

3. *Ecumenical Groups*

Crest is in dialogue with at least three ecumenical groups that have deputed their workers to our training programmes and buy our literature. There exists in our sister organizations several agencies for health, welfare, and women and children development. These agencies are now coming to realize that in NFP there is a powerful means to keep the couple and the family together. One of the best and

strongest arguments for NFP is presented in a book titled *The Christian Couple*, by Larry and Nordis Christenson (Kingsway Publication), which every NFP promoter should read.

4. The Government

Crest has been represented on the State Family Welfare Council and has been freely allowed to work even in the time of the Emergency. In fact I must mention here that a decision of the Health Ministry at that time to stop the WHO study was reversed by Mrs Gandhi. Were it not for the divisions amongst NFP groups of which many, including the Government, have taken advantage, much to our detriment, I believe that NFP would have made much further inroads into Government Family Planning policies.

In Bangalore, the City Corporation has officially allowed NFP to be taught to those women who do not accept other available methods for spacing their children. We have taken advantage of this.

At the Government level the following have been achieved: a) Representation on an Indian Council of Medical Research, New Delhi, with a Consultation wherein NFP was for the first time presented in a scientific way to many eminent gynaecologists. b) A meeting with the Indian Council of Medical Research, Department of Human Reproduction, scientists. c) The presentation of a paper at a conference of the Government Institute for Research in Reproduction, in Bombay. d) A workshop for Government doctors at Ahmedabad, which resulted in a firm decision by that Government to include NFP in its programme. e) Deputation of doctors by State Governments to local NFP training programmes in various parts of India. f) The acceptance by the Government that NFP is indeed a valid method of Family Planning for Catholic Hospitals, which are obliged to provide Family Planning Services or face severe censures.

5. Other Associations

a. In December 1981 for the first time a paper on NFP was presented by *Crest*'s collaborator Dr Krishna Kumari, Professor of Obstetrics and Gynaecology at the St John's Medical College, to the Annual Conference of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists in Calcutta. The Conference at Madras in January 1983 highlighted NFP and it is worth noting that the Government was closely associated with it through a follow-up Training Programme for directors and field workers.

Crest has given support to NFP groups in Goa and Gujarat where the Governments have been receptive. Local expertise, especially

when two or three different languages are spoken in the state, must be available wherever the Government policy shows a willingness to adopt NFP.

b. The Indian Medical Association published in May 1983 a reprint of the article "The Ovulation Method in India", from the *International Review of Family Planning*. It also offered to host the workshop for doctors on "The Modern Scientific Advances and Effective Use of the Ovulation Method for Family Planning". *Crest* seeks to establish firmer links with this very powerful medical group in India.

c. The Trained Nurses Association of India has now a workshop on NFP under preparation.

d. The Catholic Hospital Association of India, and the Voluntary Health Association of India (an ecumenical organization) have also been helped by *Crest*, especially the former, by way of articles for their bulletins and participation in their programmes for key health groups.

e. Community Health Workers (CHW) have an intensive three day programme on NFP given regularly to them. They come to Bangalore for training in Community Health. About six such training programmes have been given.

f. Medical colleges in Bangalore and in Kerala have been helped by way of slide lectures and literature.

3. *Publications*

Crest has done itself proud by its publications in English, and in other languages. The more important works are: *Population Education for Quality of Life* by M. M. Mascarenhas, Family Welfare Centre, Bangalore, in its 2nd edition, prescribed by the Director of Collegiate Education for all State Colleges, *The Natural Family Planning Teacher*, also in its 2nd edition; *Counselling Youth, ATC, Bangalore*, also in its 2nd edition; *Abortion and You*, by M. M. Mascarenhas, ATC, Bangalore, *Family Life Education*, etc.

Scientific articles and studies on NFP have been published in the national press, in the prestigious *India Today*, and in the journals *The Indian Medical Association*, *Social and Preventive Medicine*, *The Bulletin of the Federation of St Luke's Guild*, *The International Review of Natural Family Planning* (U.S.A.), etc.

4. *Methodology of Teaching*

The methodology is adapted to various groups and varies according to the attitude of the persons in the group.

a) *To nurses and medical students*: for them the emphasis is on the *medical standards which must ensure safety, effectivity and acceptability*,

and on the fact that these three criteria are met only by the NFP method. We add that Family Planning is an integral part of Maternity and Child Health Services, hence it must be provided at ante and post natal clinics and in Paediatric wards wherever, because of lack of spacing or breast-feeding, infant morbidity and mortality is high. *There is no need to criticize or decry the contraceptives.* NFP has intrinsic worth and its medical advantages are sufficient for its promotion.

b) *To Community Health Workers (CHWs)*: to this group the advantages of aiming at a *self-energised family* are put forward. "Fertility knowledge is fertility control". Hence the couples who can manage their own fertility control, because they know they possess the power through the new knowledge of their bodies and joint sexuality, will be the couples who are not dependent on doctors, hospitals or drug stores. Moreover, Child Health Welfare Services are ideally suited to promote NFP as integrated with health education for nutrition and hygiene.

c) *To Women's groups*: here a very powerful argument for NFP is that women are not called to face any risk or hazard to health. They become joint partners with their husbands "It takes two to have a child, hence it should also take two not to have a child". Equality in practice and a hightened awareness in the husband of the wife's fertility and her cyclical changes are some of the positive by-products of the NFP.

The finding that the *libido* or sex urge is maximum just before and after the period, and that this corresponds to the infertile time, is brought home to reluctant husbands. As a husband put it: "I disliked the idea of abstinence on my part. But after a few months, my wife started responding so positively. She was no longer a statue in bed. So now I don't mind the abstinence". We use this husband's witness to coax reluctant spouses to at least give NFP a try for few months — especially in those instances where the wife would really like to use the method.

d) *To the educated elite*: these persons constitute the most difficult group to convince. Now that the scientific validity of NFP methods has been firmly established, they question the practical possibility of making their husbands abstain. The questions at the back of their mind are often: Will the husbands be unfaithful, as a result ? What about the pill ? Is there any harm in abstinence ? etc. etc. Completely in the grip of technology and convinced that everything modern and technological has to be used without hesitation, the Western world wants everything "instant", and it is this *instant technological attitude* that is destroying the human spirit. A mixture of agressiveness and

dispassionate evidence has to be used in order to arouse the educated elite to the richness and potential of their sexuality, and to make them aware of the essential difference between genitality and sexuality. But once convinced, their witness is very powerful.

e) *To government and international bodies*: nothing succeeds like success In the world of Family Planning a successful user is the best propaganda. It is of interest to know that the states and territories in India with a significant Christian (majority Catholic) population, like Goa, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, have the lowest birth rate in the country. Statistics, ready-to-offer projects, integrated and well defined programmes, are the stuff to offer to the Government and win its approval and collaboration We must remember that NFP does not have any companies with drugs or devices to sell, and our salesmanship consists of our users and our own unity as workers.

Such unity must be achieved before it is too late. Studies and documents should be made available on a wider basis. A sharing of materials and audio-visual aids with Government employed doctors and medical colleges is needed. There is no dearth of NFP material, but the lack of co-ordination, dialogue and sharing amongst NFP workers is significant. If the Government has to be with us, we must have several good and well staffed Regional Centres which can offer facilities for reference and documentation. Perhaps here is our greatest weakness

In its own small way *Crest* has tried to do its bit in these lines. It is a registered trust with no grant except for occasional publications, and we are forced to work towards self-sufficiency, a good thing, but difficult at present *Crest* is trying its best to persuade donor agencies to this end, that we need help to grow to self-sufficiency, specially now that NFP is better known and wanted.

5. *Standardization of Teaching*

Crest has maintained from the very beginning the need for a standard terminology, teaching procedure and evaluation. We have followed in this the recommendations of the NFP expert team of the WHO.

1. The teaching varies from 3 to 5 days of intensive programmes. An attendance certificate is awarded to the NFP teacher at the conclusion.

2. She is asked to keep her own chart, whenever possible.

3. She is required to answer a detailed test, given orally if she is unable to write, otherwise written, in which she works towards a score of 90%. This may take time.

4. She is also required to follow up five couples for a minimum of six months and to meet her supervisor during this time.

5. At the end she presents her charts for correction, and is given a small refresher test. When she satisfies the requirements she is awarded a Teacher's Certificate. In this way teachers trained by *Grest*, whether in India or elsewhere, have kept up a high standard. It is interesting to note that in the WHO study an elderly couple and a religious nurse sister were assessed as the best teachers. Their maturity and conviction were obvious

In fertility knowledge lies fertility control, and ultimately this is where our future work and plans must lie. We must further knowledge and so help couples to use it for their health and happiness.

Critical Historicity in the Contextualization of Morals

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J

In the past moralists have tended to focus their attention on moral texts, and have largely ignored the contexts of their origins and formulations. A contextual study of morals demands paying attention to the historicity of moral imperatives. Such a study is a critical demand for any transformative praxis. To respond to this demand one cannot be content with a purely sociological analysis of the context of morals which would merely be explanatory. We recall the Marxist axiom "Philosophers have only interpreted the world in various ways, the point is to change it".[1] For a liberative contextualization of morals, a mere attention to the historicity of contexts of a purely explanatory kind is not sufficient. The historicity of the context of moral texts must be *critically* understood. Hence I speak of *critical historicity*. I intend to show here that this is a significant principle for a transformative praxis.

I

CRITICAL HISTORICITY

Beyond and besides recognition of the historical nature of the contexts of moral imperatives (moral texts), we need a critical clarification of these imperatives. These ought to be judged by the criterion of *the commitment to the justice, freedom and dignity of the last and the least of human persons and communities*. Such a commitment makes for critical historicity.[2] This commitment is to the historical project of the poor, whereby the non-persons become persons and agents (subjects) of their own history and cease to be objects of exploitation and manipulated history. This commitment is the expression of our preference for the poor and our responsibility in history for the dignity of the non-persons. The moral commitment to the dignity of *every* human person (*sarvodaya*) is critically mediated by the option for the *last and least* human persons (*antyodaya*).

1. This axiom of Marx has become quite significant in the definition of praxis. Cf. Arthur F. McGOVERN, *Marxism: An American Christian Perspective*, New York, Orbis Books 1981, pp. 25-6.

2. Cf. Enrique DUSSEL, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, New York, Orbis Books 1978, especially chs. 1, 2 and 4, for the study of ethics from the point of view of the liberation of the poor. I am greatly indebted to DUSSEL for the orientation of this paper.

Commitment to the dignity of the last and the least human persons is a historical imperative having an absolute character. Absoluteness is used in moral discourse in the sense of unconditioned universality. What needs to be clearly stressed is that moral imperatives are objective absolutes in history They are objective in the sense that they are related and proportionate to reality. All moral imperatives become critically historical and objective in so far as they are related and proportionate to the reality of the last and the least human persons through a commitment to their dignity. Any interpretation of moral imperatives that ignores this critical historical and objective character would be subjectivistic or relativistic. It would indeed be escapist.[3]

Critical historicity as an operative principle of transformative praxis demands both an analytical knowledge of and a holistic approach to the total context of human persons and communities. It must help to discern the moral imperatives in the different dimensions of human behaviour —personal, inter-personal, socio-economic, political, cultural It is a principle of clarification of the moral imperatives in the total context of human persons and communities. This context embraces the whole gamut of interhuman relationships, relations between communities and nations, relations of human persons and communities with nature and the cosmos, etc , all of which come to have religio-cultural, socio-economic and political expressions. Critical historicity, when applied to the perception and interpretation of moral imperatives, saves them in praxis from a spiritualized and non-historical application[4] In my view, such an approach helps towards an integration of the service of faith and the promotion of justice.

A significant aspect of critical historicity is the awareness of the social (or class) position of the moral agent or subject. Human persons as subjects of moral agency perceive, interpret and respond to moral imperative from the position of the class in which they find or place themselves. The class position informs and influences the cultural, socio-economic and political dimensions of moral behaviour. We can illustrate this with an example. A worker, we say, has a right to shelter, as this is a basic human need. From the social position of poverty, a poor worker perceives, interprets and responds to this right in terms of a one-room house that protects him and his family from sun, rain and cold, such as we see in our slums. A

3. Cf. Joseph FUCHS, "Absoluteness of Moral Terms", in *Readings in Moral Theology No* 1, ed. by Charles E. CURRAN and Richard A McCORMICK, New York, Paulist Press, 1979, pp. 113-6, on "objective" and "absolute"

4. On the inculturation of morals cf Franz FURGER, "Christliche Ethik zwischen Inkulturation and Einheit", *Studia Moralia* 20 (1982), pp. 259-75 Also F FURGER, "Inkulturation — eine Herausforderung an die Moraltheologie", to be published in *Neue Zeitschrift fur Missionswissensshaft*, nos 3 and 4 (1984), Paul VALADIER, "Le relativisme moral, est-il fondé ?", in *Etudes*, May 1983, pp 685-700, A. T. HENELLY *Theologies in Conflict*, New York, Orbis Books, 1979, p 97 (on the magical approach to dogma and morality). For the socio-political option from the standpoint of the poor, cf. J. L. SEGUNDO, "Capitalism vs Socialism · Crux Theologica", in *The Frontiers of Theology in Latin America*, ed. by R. GIBELLINI, New York, Orbis Books, 1979, pp. 250-1.

person who belongs to a high middle-class perceives, interprets and responds to the same right in terms of a multi-room, well furnished house, with inner wall decorations of a particularly cultivated taste. Anything short of that would not be a home for that person. A luxury turns out to be a basic need claiming parity with a poor worker's need for a one-room home. Critical historicity exposes how class-conditioned are our perceptions, interpretations and responses.

With the principle of critical historicity, we begin to understand societal structures that are sinful.[5] The analytical and holistic knowledge demanded by critical historicity will reveal how cultural symbols and socio-economic and political structures come to embody individual and collective egoisms of people and nations, and work towards the creation of an increasingly marginalized class, deprived of freedom, justice and dignity.[6] Through critical historicity we examine the whole structure of morality in every culture and community. Critical historicity is not directly concerned with the moral norm of rightness and wrongness of particular human acts understood in a narrow sense, but *with the contextualized character of all our moral perceptions, interpretations and responses.*

Critical historicity is evangelically clarified by the good news of the Kingdom of God to the poor. God's historical response and preferential love for the poor (in an economic and social sense) is revealed in and through the person and ministry of Jesus.[7] The royal justice of God requires that the poor cease to be poor and challenges the rich to cease to be rich.[8]

I would like now to offer some reflections on three different areas of moral theology with the help of the principle of critical historicity. It will help us to rethink and clarify morality both at the categorical level of particular imperatives and at the meta-ethical level of goals and orientation imperatives (called morality at the transcendental level).[9]

---

5 Cf here what liberation theologians call "structural epistemology", which puts the accent on structures of injustice in society, social sin and their transformation. Cf, in this connection, G BAUM's article "Gutierrez and the Catholic Tradition", in *The Ecumenist*, 31 (1983) p 82, on the two meanings of liberation, (a) the liberal meaning that stresses change of individuals for the transformation of society and (b) the new approach arguing for structural change as a condition of the transformation of society. Cf also P KERANS, *Sinful Social Structures*, New York, Paulist Press, 1978. This small book is the only one I have seen on the subject. Cf S AROKIASAMY, "Sinful Social Structures", in *The Rally* Vol. 59, no. 5 Dec 1983) pp. 6-7; G Baum, "Critical Theology" in *Conversion* ed by W E Conn, N. Y. 1978, pp 281-96

6 Cf. G SOARES-PRABHU, S J, "The Christian Response to the Indian Situation", section 4, in *Basic Community Library Service*, Bombay, Seva Niketan, n.d.

7 Cf. Jacques DUPONT, "The Poor and Poverty in the Gospel and Acts", in *Gospel Poverty*, by Augustine GEORGE *et alii*, Chicago, Franciscan Press 1977. Cf. pp 25-52, and specially p. 41. Cf also Aloysius PIERIS, "The Mission of the Local Church in relation to other Major Religious Traditions", in *Witness*, 4th quarter 1982, p. 61.

8 Cf David J BOSCH, "The Scope of Mission", in *Sedos Bulletin*, 15th March 1984, p 93.

9. Josef FUCHS, "Is there a Christian Morality ?", in *Readings in Moral Theology No. 2*, ed by Charles CURRAN and Richard E. McCORMICK, New York, Paulist Press, 1980, p. 5.

II

SOME INDIAN PROBLEMS

I would like here to critique moral solutions offered for some problems of Indian culture and society, and show them to be flawed and ineffective because of the lack of critical historicity. The examples are in the areas of caste, social ethics of wealth, and sexual ethics. My critique is not an exhaustive study of each of these examples. It is rather a brief comment on problems sufficiently known to all.

1. *Critical Historicity in relation to varna and jati*

Let us first examine the ideal of *varṇa* in relation to caste as it is explained by exponents of neo-Hinduism.[10] Our critique bears on the interaction between the spiritual ideal of *varṇa* and the sociological reality of castes. In the modern democratic secular movements of India, many enlightened Hindu social thinkers began to attack the whole of *varṇadharma* as iniquitous. The exponents of Keo-Hinduism answered that the spiritual idea of *varṇa* is that one must become or be a brahmin and that this is a spiritual enterprise, while to become or be a shudra is a degeneration of the perfect state of humanity. Through fidelity to one's vocation (*svadharma*) a shudra can attain brahminhood Through infidelity to one's *svadharma* one can fall from brahminhood into shudrahood But such an explanation does not critically reckon with how the social position makes people use the *varṇa* ideal as a support for their privileges in the *status quo*.

To the exponents of neo-Hinduism, the sociological reality of castes (*jātis*) with their social hierarchy and rigid and discriminatory elements is a distortion of the spiritual ideal of *varṇa*, which is on principle open to all. *Jāti* has nothing to do with *varna*. Their suggestion for the reform of the discriminatory aspects of the caste system is a call to return to the pristine ideal of *varṇa*. But the question to be asked now is: how can the spirituality of *varṇa*, that has functioned as a legitimizing ideology for the caste hierarchy with its power-relations, structures and privileges, and created and perpetuated untouchability, how can it become a source of caste reform by a mere simplistic appeal to a return to "the pristine intention" of the *varṇa* ideal ?[11] Such an approach ignores what has historically happened to, and what people have done with the spirituality of *varṇa*. A return to the supposedly pristine ideal of *varṇa* will not contribute to a change of this caste-ridden society. The approach of the exponents of neo-Hinduism seems to be a search for a spiritualized, non-historical solution.

---

10. Such an approach is reflected in VIVEKANANDA, *Caste, Culture and Socialism*, Calcutta, Advaita Ashram, 1978. Cf. also M. K. GANDHI, *My Varnashramadharma*, Bombay 1965, S RADHAKRISHNAN, *Hindu View of Life*, London, Unwin Books, 1965, pp. 67-90. The ideological relationship between *varṇa* and *jāti* has been studied by Dipankar GUPTA, "From *varṇa* to *jāti*· the Indian Caste System from the Asiatic to the Feudal Mode of Production", I.S.I. Documentation Series, Bangalore.

11. Cf. D. GUPTA, *art. cit.*

Gandhi and Untouchability

In his fight against untouchability, Gandhiji defended the value of the spiritual ideal of *varṇa*. He would grant that the *varṇa* ideal had degenerated into a rigid caste system. He would not recognize that it had become the legitimizing spirituality and ideology for the existing *jātis*. He would speak of untouchability as caused by the selfishness of people.

Gandhi called the untouchables *harijan* (children of God), a term that intended to affirm their dignity. If he believed that the true dignity of every human person lay in being *hari-jan*, then his calling the untouchables *harijan* should have contained a challenge to the high castes that their true dignity, too, lay not in their being brahmin or twice-born, but in being children of God, *hari-jan*. Gandhiji could then have been subversively prophetic. In Gandhi's approach, there is a lack of critical historicity.[12] Historically the term *harijan* has degenerated into being another denomination for the untouchables and is therefore a term rejected by the dalit movements. Thus Gandhiji's interpretation of the social imperative against untouchability was ineffective.

The bhakti movement and the social protest against caste

The bhakti movement in Hinduism contains a social protest against the caste system. It is a movement from the periphery. Bhakta saints belong often to the shudra caste. Through bhakti any one can attain to the lotus-feet of the Lord. Bhakti as a *mukti-dharma* makes caste and social position irrelevant to salvation. It affirms the equality of all in the order of salvation. As a spiritual ideal or in its sociological expression as castes, *varna* is bypassed in the bhakti movement. The reformist approach to the bhakti movement is to make it, through what I would call an accomodating adoption, one of the legitimate *mārgas* (ways) of the Hindu tradition. It would not recognize that it implies a totally different path to salvation, an antithesis to the Brahmanic tradition. Bhakti should be seen "not as a variant of the system, but an entirely different system in itself".[13]

There are orthodox Hindus who would not consider the bhakti movements to belong to the essence of Hinduism. In its accomodating

12. Here we should note that GANDHI had to settle for a compromize with the high castes, the wealthy and the middle-class intelligentsia, in the common struggle for national independence.

13. SIDDHARTHA, "Bhakti as Social Protest" in *Negations* no 6 (1983) p 12. Cf. also D. D. KOSAMBI, *Myth and Reality*, Bombay, Popular Prakashan 1962, reprinted in 1983, pp 31-5, on the social functions of bhakti. KOSAMBI discusses in ch. 1 the social and economic aspects of the *Bhagavad Gītā*. In this connection he also studies the social functions of bhakti. He maintains that the one bhakti innovation which he finds in the *Gītā* (i.e. personal devotion) fitted the needs of a feudal society. "The essence of a fully developed feudalism is the chain of personal loyalty which binds retainer to chief, tenant to lord, and baron to king or emperor. Not loyalty in the abstract, but with a secure foundation in the means and relations of production: land ownership, military service, tax collection, and the conversion of local produce into commodities through the magnates" (p. 31). KOSAMBI observes also also that "the conglomerate *Gītā* philosophy might provide a loophole for innovation, but never the analytical tools necessary to make a way out of the social impasse" (p 35).

adoption as one of the *mārgas* in Hinduism, the prophetic challenge of bhakti to the ethos of *varṇa* and caste is blunted and is made to disappear. Such a historical happening reminds us of the fate of Buddhism vis-a-vis the Brahmanic orthodoxy of India. Of late one could see the principle of accomodating adoption operative in the efforts of the RSS, through the process of sanskritization, to accomodate Dr Ambedkar, who became a neo-Buddhist in protest, and with him other dalits.[14] Though the relationship between bhakti and caste may be complex, it too needs to be analysed through critical historicity.

2. *The Gandhian Concept of Trusteeship*

In the area of the social ethics of wealth, I would like to make some observation by applying the principle of critical historicity to Gandhiji's ideas of trusteeship, which he proposed to the wealthy industrialists of the country as their way of being responsible for the good of the people. They are not owners, but trustees of the national wealth.[15] We have to note what this comes to serve later on — it becomes an easily acceptable, non-disturbing ideology and spirituality, convenient to the Birlas and other wealthy industrialists, who were entrenched in structures and relations of power without participatory and democratic accountability. The Gandhian concept of trusteeship does not reckon with the power relations and structures created by the wealth accumulated in few hands. Because of this lack of critical historicity, trusteeship does not embody a challenge to change the structures of power relationships and to promote participation by the people. It does not give the analytical tool and knowledge needed to serve the basic rights of the poor Therefore the Gandhian concept of trusteeship cannot become an effective form of historical responsibility.

3. *The Ideal of Chastity in the Indian Tradition*

We can also apply the principle of critical historicity to the realm of sexual ethics. We shall do this through a look at the ideal of chastity held up to women in India.[16] Let us examine what happens historically to this ideal in the cases of rape. Rape means that men

---

14. Cf. *Dalit Voice*, Vol 3, March 16-31, 1984, pp. 11-12, for similar attempts to accomodate the neo-Buddhist Ambedkar in the Hindu fold

15. According to *Gandhiji*, trusteeship is based on this idea. "What belongs to me is the right to an honourable livelihood, no better than enjoyed by millions of others The rest of my wealth belongs to the community and must be used for the welfare of the community" (quoted by Romesh DIWAN, "Trusteeship and Decentralization", in *Gandhi Marg* 1 (1979-80) p. 656) Here is another quotation in which GANDHI exhorts the rich to share their wealth as an exercise of trusteeship "The contrast between the palaces of New Delhi and the miserable hovels of the poor labouring class nearby cannot last one day in a free India in which the poor will enjoy the same power as the richest in the land. A violent and bloody revolution is a certainty one day unless there is a voluntary abdication of riches and power that riches give, and sharing them for the common good' (quoted in *Gandhi Marg*, 5 (1983-84) p. 818). Even this exhortation does not show that GANDHI has clarified the structural changes needed for effective stewardship. The entrenched power structures of the rich are not so easily changed.

16. Cf. *The Laws of Manu* 5,154, on the chaste fidelity of the woman to her husband. The ideal of *pativratā* as the expression of a *satī* needs to be critically examined.

perpetrate violence on innocent women, using them as objects of lust. In a culture that has exalted the chastity of women to such a sublime degree as ours, the women victims of rape find themselves polluted and their future, if they are unmarried, is closed. As for the criminals, at best they are punished by law, if they are caught at all. But there is no court or judge that gives a juridical verdict on the culture and society that marginalize and reject raped women and drive them into despair and suicide. Our judicial system functions with an individualistic understanding of morality. It ignores that all virtues are both personal and social and that virtue needs to be made socially possible Though civil and criminal law do not coincide with the whole of morality, yet if there is an understanding that authentic morality needs social support to translate itself into a promoter of the common good, then the judiciary can be creative in interpreting the law and in judging in such a way as to promote the justice for the poor and the oppressed The preferential principle -- commitment to justice and to the dignity due to the last and the least human person — makes social justice historical possible, and guarantees the justice and the dignity of every human being

Our principle of critical historicity thus makes us question, from the position of the raped victims, the cultural ideal of chastity that has degenerated into chastity for women only, an ideal convenient to the selfish ends of a male-dominated society. As a result of a culture of oppression, women victims live a culture of silence. No one asks why the ideal of chastity is not an equally significant imperative for men We need to recognize the need for chastity to become a common ideal, guaranteeing the dignity of both men and women.[17] Moral imperatives should not serve class interests and become principles of marginalization of a section of the human family.

These reflections are tentative and exploratory in nature. There is need for a wider clarification of the principle of critical historicity and its application to the different areas of ethics, such as eco-ethics, bio-ethics, etc., in a synthetic manner I also recognize the need to relate this principle to different paradigms of ethical outlooks, such as Hindu, Judeo-Christian and Tribal. This last point is important for the contextualization of morals in pluralistic India.

---

17 Cf Bharatiyar's poem, "The Kummi Song of Women's Liberation", in *Bharatiayar Kavithaikal*, Cennai, Poompukar Publications, 1978, p 211. for the idea that chastity should be the common ideal of man and woman and be liberative of women Cf. Thiruvalluvar's *Tirukkural*, ch. 5, on the greatness of the chastity of women in his time when it had not yet degenerated into an ideological morality of a male-dominated society Critical historicity needs also be applied to the one-sided stress in the moral theology and pastoral practice of the Roman Catholic church Here cf. L. Segundo, *Evolution and Guilt*, New York, Orbis Books, 1974, pp. 90-93. Cf. also in this connection, Francis X. Meehan, *A Contemporary Social Spirituality*, New York, Orbis Books, 1982, especially ch 12. "Making the Connection between Sexual Ethics and Social Justice", pp 98-107. Cf. E. Dussel, *Ethics and the Theology of Liberation*, ch 4, pp. 100-119.

Document

An Appeal from the President, World Conference of Religion for Peace, for Faith in Action

Forestalling Nuclear War

Dear brothers and sisters in the Lord,

The fate of mankind hangs in the balance. People who are conscious of the extreme gravity of the situation await in anguish and with baited breath the lessening of tension and the receding of the threat of nuclear annihilation. Nothing is more crucial for mankind today than that there should be a resounding NO to nuclear war. One Hiroshima is enough! No more Nagasakis!

Can the silent majority of the peoples of the world be roused to some effective action? Can the faithful of all religions and all people of good-will around the world be galvanized into stepping up public opinion and creating a unity and universality of conscience to halt, reduce and phase out nuclear weapons?

The recent call "Mankind's survival in jeopardy" by the six leaders from four continents merits the widest publicity and support. It represents "faith in the capacity of human beings to rise above the current divisions and create a world free from the shadow of nuclear war."

People of religious faith should not lag behind in making their contribution towards defusing the crisis. World Peace begins in the minds and hearts of individuals. It is nurtured in the bosom of the family and reflected thereafter in the structures of society, even though these sometimes tend to run counter to the welfare of the human beings they are intended to serve.

After much hesitation and prayerful discernment, as President of WCRP/International, I am therefore making this appeal to religious leaders and believers everywhere to mount a massive PRAYER CAMPAIGN, in whatever way they can, to help save humanity from disaster. This can be done through daily personal prayer, through getting together in the family and in community worship whenever that is feasible. We will thus be strengthening the quest for peace and the courage to sustain it as genuine instruments of the Lord.

World Peace will ultimately be brought about, if at all, by ordinary people whose lives are spent in prayerful concern before the Lord and in forgiveness, mutual trust and friendliness with all people. Pinpointing the main issues that must initiate the reversal of present disastrous trends at world level can add zest to the campaign and

impart to it a sense of urgency Let these intentions then be presented to the Lord in prayer·

First, that calling a *HALT* to the nuclear arms race be given effect to immediately, first and foremost by the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R.

"Nuclear freeze" means no developing, no testing, no use of nuclear weapons and their delivery systems

Second, that the leaders of the nations continue to work assiduously for a *United Nations Treaty* outlawing all use of nuclear weapons as a crime against humanity.

Third, that, simultaneously with crying halt, there should be a *substantial scaling down* and gradual phasing out of all nuclear weapons, at least by the end of the decade.

Fourth, that the nations place their *common security*, not in arms and armaments, but in working together, with all the know-how and resources at their command, "so that all people may enjoy a life of security and dignity in an international system free of war and based on peace and justice"

It must surely be part of the Lord's plan that, at this critical juncture of human history, his children should in deep faith be united together as brothers and sisters in fervent, mutually-supportive prayer, that nuclear weapons be abolished and the world's masses freed from hunger and oppression.

People of faith, I call upon you to rise to the occasion and from the hid battlements of eternity to keep the pressure mounting on the powers that be to change the direction of human society. It is the political will to change that is the heart of the matter As a climax to the Prayer Campaign and as a harbinger for a better future, let U. N. Day, Wednesday the 24th of October, 1984, be commemorated the world over. Let there be multi-religious celebrations of a suitable nature to signalize a giant leap forward along the journey towards Peace with justice – a world without war, a farewell to arms.

✠ Archbishop Angelo FERNANDES
Archbishop of Delhi
President W.C.R.P.

New Delhi
9-10 *June* 1984

Correspondence

Evangelization and Baptism

Dear Editor,

In the context of the discussion on Evangelization that is going on in Vidyajyoti, may I make a small contribution of our experience.

Since Pope Paul VI proposed Evangelization as the topic for the Synod, the meaning, goals, methods and even the essential content of the word Evangelization have been undergoing kaleidescopic changes The process is still going on

In our work over here, we have understood Evangelization to mean making the people listen by various means to the call of God in Christ and inviting them to become the little flock In other words, the dough listens to the Word and if the inner voice clamours for it a certain portion of the dough gets converted into the leaven of Christ This happens at times immediately, but mostly over the years. Only a few buy the pearl of great price

This leaven takes to witnessing to Christ by a life of prayer, which addresses itself to the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; by mutual helpfulness and unity which excludes none, and by making sacrifices for the human development of oneself, of the members of the family and of others as well Sometimes a single member of the family, with all the inherent consequences, undertakes to undergo this conversion for the welfare of the family, of the village, relations, friends and the community

Most of the time this converted member or his conversion is sought to be destroyed by the promoters or defenders of tribalism, totalitarianism or nationalism For we are "a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a dedicated nation and a people claimed by God as his own" Ostracization, harrassment, asault, even terrorization unto death has been tried by the inimical forces singly or unitedly But rare has been the case where the converted leaven went underground or got deconverted into the dough. On the contrary, the best villagers have joined the flock amidst persecution

Malicious propaganda had been let loose and held sway over the years in the area It has described the leaven as having become a foreign element, harbinger of colonialism, perpetrators of imperialism, as an unpatriotic and treacherous agent in the secret service of foreign countries, or as trading one's caste and religion for filthy lucre

Undertaking leaven-making catechesis has made many of us—Missionaries, catechists and Christians of the villages — pass through the valley of death on many occasions since 1977. But the Lord has saved us. In the meantime, the vine has been giving new shoots and branches continuously. Did not Our Master say. "I send you as lambs among wolves", "Little flock, do not fear", and "I have overcome the World" ?

Christo Sewa Ashram, Fr Mangal Das, S.J.
Kalna 713 409

Dear Editor,

I enclose herewith our reaction to Fr Angelo Devadass' article "Evangelization and Baptism", published in the May issue of Vidyajyoti [1]

1. We hope to publish this rather lengththy reply to Fr Devadass, signed by Frs Leslie D'Souza, Joao B. D'Costa S.J., and Pablo Gil S.J., in a later issue of Vidyajyoti.

I was stunned to read that a missionary now in his 70's feels that he has been wasting his time bringing people to the Church of Christ, that it would have sufficed to preach to the non-Christians the love of Christ

I think Fr Devadass and VIDYAJYOTI have done a great service in putting down in writing a view of evangelization that is quite common among the younger generation of priests coming into the field I had never seen it so clearly presented in writing I am glad because it is sure it is going to provoke a strong reaction from many missionaries in the field If this view were to prevail among the present and future missionaries in India, true evangelization would grind to a halt, and a church that does not grow, dies out

I remain yours sincerely and gratefully in the Lord,

Mount Carmel Cathedral
Mirzapur
Ahmedabad-380 001

FR Pablo GIL, S J

The Holy

Dear Editor,

I cannot refrain from thanking and congratulating you for the article on 'The Holy' in the May issue of VIDYAJYOTI It could not be more timely or topical, especially in these days when God and the Divine are sometimes so trivialized, even by so-called prayer-groups I have read in a letter from one youth to another — 'God is a great guy' ! And I've heard of a priest advising nuns to call God 'Darling', 'Honeypot', 'Popsickle' and other such idiocies

I was delighted to find the author stressing the sense of the sacred even in the New Testament I agree though about the ambiguity of 'fear' I suggest an old but still used and very usable word that the author mentions only in passing — namely 'awe' The very sound of this word gives the impression of reverential fear and we must remember that there was an element of fear then too

The Israelites were forbidden to come within four miles of Mount Sinai on pain of death and two non-Levite Israelites actually died for touching the ark, even though to prevent its falling

In Hindi, I use the term 'Adarpoorn', — respectful fear Let us hope that the article will have as much influence as it deserves

The Cathedral
Ajmer 305 001

FR R H LESSER

Book Reviews

Spirituality

Community Prayer-Book By Ignatius ECHANIZ, S J *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1984 Pp. vi-262 Rs 25

This is a new edition which rearranges two earlier volumes into one Certain materials have been dropped, v.g. the Church's Night Prayer, Vespers for the feasts of Our Lady and of the Apostles, Prayer to the H Spirit, Indian Series 1-3, etc. On the other hand much new material has been brought in, v g prayer for vocations, for a good monsoon, Sunday (and weekdays) 1-3 of Advent, Christmas Octave, Sundays (and weekdays) 1-5 of Lent with Holy Week Penitential Service, etc

The new edition continues to view religious communities as the main users of the volume Originally composed for Jesuit communities, the prayers can easily be adapted to the specific needs or character of any religious community In some cases suggestions for such adaptations have been inserted, or an alternative formula is offered Prayers specifically meant for Jesuit use have been relegated to a Supplement A brief introduction added to some of the prayers or sections helps to create a proper atmosphere or to understand better the meaning of the prayer The indication for posture stand/sit/kneel is omitted Unfortunately the reference to *Didaché* 9-10 (p 74, Unity II) has fallen out, such reference to early Christian documents is precious as it reminds us of our Christian heritage

In some of the Prayers a musical, setting is given for the acclamations In a next edition the names of the composers might rightfully be given for the following. p. 74 (Glory to the Lord) L Deiss, p 75 (Gracious Lord) D Julien; p. 127 (Maranatha) L Deiss, p. 130 (Rouse up) Lécossais; p 162 (Christ our Saviour) R Jef; p. 166 (Glory and praise) L. Deiss; p. 169 (You have restored us), and p. 171 (Save us) A De Souza.

The Introduction concludes with an excellent "word on the use of the material offered", *viz* about 'flexibility' (which applies to liturgy and paraliturgy alike), and the importance of the 'reading' (p. iv) "While a healthy flexibility is to be applied and room left for adaptation to different situations and needs, I would still make a plea for a respectful observance of the natural rythm of Christian prayer, which is like the breathing-in and breathing-out of our respiration" The 'reading' should never be omitted, no matter how brief the time given to the prayer "God always has the initiative and we only respond to him" There is a wide range to choose from, v g Scripture, conciliar documents, encyclicals, constitutions, etc

J VOLCKAERT, S.J

The Eucharistic Liturgy in the Christian East. Edited by Dr John MADEY. *Kottayam, Prakasam Publications, Paderborn, Eastern Churches Service*, 1982 Pp. viii-387 No price given

When a sincere enquirer wants to obtain some knowledge of the eucharistic liturgy of the Eastern Churches, he can possibly get a rather quick, often terribly summarized, account in some encyclopaedia or other The two volumes of Archdale King published in 1950 are long out of print Their very size would discourage anybody from opening them. Moreover Archdale King, though a good liturgist, was more versed in the Western side of liturgiology than in its Eastern developments

Here we have a well-written series of contributions Each describes the eucharistic liturgy of a particular tradition Thus we have successively the Coptic, Ethiopian, Syrian, Maronite, Syro-Malankara, Assyro-Chaldaean, Chaldeo-Indian, Melkite (Byzantine of the Middle East) and Armenian liturgies. In an appendix, a layman, professor of a university College, analyses the intimate connection that exists between the Syro-Malankara Liturgy and the Bible Each contribution is written by a member of the Church concerned, four of them by bishops This means that the writers are not mere theoreticians, but have a living experience of their own liturgical life This makes all the difference. In most cases the

chief anaphora, which serves as the pattern for the rest, some times also the *ordo communis*, are given in translation Some of the contributions, such as the Syrian and the Syro-Malankara, complete each other very fruitfully Many of the writers are not satisfied with mere liturgiology They have gone deeper, into an appreciation of their tradition, its ethos, its theology, its spirituality

We can only be thankful to Dr J Madey and to his collaborator in India, Fr Hormice Perumalil C M I, for bringing out such a handsome and useful volume on the Divine Liturgies

E R HAMBYE S J

'Kalkalnadini' — 'The Singing of the Stream'. By ISHPRIYA *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation,* 1984 Pp ii-49 Rs 10

Kalkalnadini is a collection of poetic compositions full of insight and beauty *Kalkal* means concern, solitude, the yearning of pity, and *nadini* means stream This 'stream' 'sings' about the things and actions of everyday religious life, and about the Stations of the Cross which are linked up with the ashram vows and some core spiritual concepts, and it finally comes back to the realities of 'each day', like sound and silence, rain, and the sunset

The author, Ishpriya, a sannyasini, Catholic nun (R S C J), English by birth, has spent several years at the Christa Prema Seva Ashram, Pune, till she went with her companion, Vandana Mataji (to whom the book is dedicated), to Rishikesh, the main ashram centre in India. There they established the 'Jeevadhara Kutir', a small ashram, just at the spot where the Ganga gushes from the last range of the Himalayas The compositions witness to an intense, spiritual encounter of Christian faith with Hindu religiosity The things of life and worship become illumined from within, they take new meanings in a context both Indian and Christian A happening, an event, helps to grasp a Gospel insight more deeply and leads on to new discoveries, new insights Physical things become symbols of a wider reality, by this the outer appearance is not destroyed but it glows with a new meaning.

When reading the poems, I remember the small volume of Romano Guardini *Heilige Zeichen* (*Sacred Signs*), which appeared about the beginning of the modern liturgical movement of the church. The book showed how things and actions can become meaningful, genuine, and its thus helped the movement to grow and find its confirmation in Vatican II.

In a similar way, signs of the secular and religious life in the Indian context have to become meaningful for us Christians. Ishpriya's booklet shows the way in this direction through compositions of depth and beauty. Reading this book, I wish that another person would add a Christian string to the expressions of Dalit literature, the most passionate and impatient in our days, a mirror of the sorrows and joys, defeats and triumphs of the poor in India This would then be the string of karma, added to the melodies of jñāna and bhakti expressed in Kalkalnadini

Professor Nandlal Pathak writes in the introduction "One cannot help being attracted by the writer's insight into Indian spirituality and her inner vision of yogic principles a vision which inspires and brings to flower these poems The key-note is bhakti (devotion), as is but natural in the land of Andal and Meera For Indian Christians such works have a great importance Nature has become for Ishpriyaji a mirror in which the reflection of the Worshipped One shines forth in its full glory" The booklet is expertly illustrated by Veera Pereira R S C J

MATTHEW LEDERLE, S J

With Pity Not with Blame. By Robert LLEWELLYN *London, Darton, Longman and Todd* 1982 Pp x-148 £ 3 95

In the present wave of interest in the mystics, these "Reflections on the Writings of Julian of Norwich and on *The Cloud of Unknowing*" (subtitle of the book) will appeal to many readers We find in these pages solid and traditional doctrine about the spiritual life, about prayer, humility, self-knowledge and even self-love Some may feel that the spirituality offered here is somewhat individualist and lacks in the social dimension But we have to keep in mind that all spirituality must be rooted in the experience of the transcendent God. Feminist theologians will be encouraged by Julian's stress on the Motherhood of God and by her astonishing words about "our true mother Jesus, who is all love, and bears us into joy and endless living" (26). It is also worth noticing that her comparison of God as "nurse" ties up with the root

etymological meaning of the Biblical word for fidelity, i e 'mn.

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Renewal and the Powers of Darkness
By Cardinal Léon-Joseph SUENENS. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd,* 1983 Pp. Xvi-117. £ 2 95

In various parts of India as elsewhere in the world the charismatic movement has in recent years tended to overstress the presence of demons and the practice of exorcisms, or more accurately the deliverance from the Devil or devils", an expression which is meant to include the cases of devilish influence which fall short of "possession" in the technical sense. Cardinal Suenens, a long-standing champion of the charismatic renewal, feels "obliged to denounce" (115) such excesses and is not afraid to affirm that "such an atmosphere is unbreathable in the Catholic Church" (109) He is concerned about the "extremely secretive or reticent nature of these practices" (99), a "contagious phenomenon" (60) rooted in a fundamentalist approach to the Bible, proper of the sects Without wanting to give names and sources out of respect for the good will of the members of the movement, the Cardinal gives a number of quite astonishing ideas propagated in its writings and practices, ideas which are all the more dangerous in cultures traditionally obsessed with the power of evil spirits, and which can warp totally the nature of the Christian faith At no moment does the author question the charismatic movement. he rather appeals to the pastors of the Church to accept the movement and be part of it But he warns against a trend which by lack of discernment could turn it into a sect. He suggests that books, brochures and cassettes on the topic of the Devil which do not reflect the mind of the Church should be withdrawn The Cardinal gives the official doctrine of the Church about evil and the Devil and clearly affirms the need for Christians to affirm their reality. One feels that his biblical and theological analyses need a deeper study (one can hardly use "Job's devil" as an argument for the existence of a personal suprahuman Power of evil [p. 7] !). The appeal to the Magisterium is constant and one-sided, making it practically the sole source of discernment. The author requests that more modern rules for exorcisms be drawn up, which take into consideration the findings of modern medicine, psychology, etc. Perhaps he himself falls into the error which he denounces of attributing to the Devil things for which he has no particular responsibility when he declares on p. 3 that "The Devil has managed to pass himself off as an anachronism this is his greatest act of cunning", and, inconsistently, on p 106, that "the most cunning trap laid by the Evil One resides in his ability to draw attention to himself, and not to Jesus, the Saviour of the world" These pages are quick pastoral notes rather than a thorough theological study But the Cardinal's warning should be well taken by all concerned.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Liberation Theology

The Gospel in Solentiname — Vol IV
By Ernesto CARDENAL *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982, Pp X-278, $ 8.95

The first volume of this set was reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI 1977, p 377 In this volume, containing shared reflections on 26 passages from the gospels, one encounters a community seriously living its faith-commitment and attempting to translate love into justice Like the early Christian community of the Acts, the people share word and bread in common Beginning with the announcement of the Kindgom (Lk 17 20-37) and trying to capture the urgency of its, message in the context of the repressive regime of Somoza, the book progresses with certain parables and events connected with this relevant theme — the coming of the Son of Man, The Talents, The Wise Virgins, The Last Judgement, The Resurrection of Lazarus etc Then, there are 'the events' of the Kingdom — the Eucharist, the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Jesus

What is remarkable is that given their own oppressive situation, the people are able to draw out the urgency and the revolutionary impact of the gospel message. Union with God brings about, before all else, union with the peasants, the very poor and abandoned, the tortured and killed under the regime. Their faith-response takes concrete shape in the revolution for justice, as an absolute requirement for the realization of the Kingdom. Sometime one gets the impression that some of the interpretations are simplistic, stretched a bit too far, and that they jump to conclusions very fast, but then this could mean that my judgment is derived from

a purely 'academic framework' and misses the heart of the matter — the suffering, the struggle against the structures of oppression, the serious attempt to listen to the gospel as it speaks in the 'here and now' of a situation and the commitment to justice through the revolution. Perhaps the greatest merit of this book is that it tries to free Christianity from an irrelevance occasioned by its seeming complicity with the exploitative *status quo*, its overemphasis on a ritualistic piety and individualistic ethics and a sacramental dispensation devoid of true revolutionary impetus. It makes Christ and his message alive, urgent, liberative and the Eucharist (the context of the shared reflections) a deep experience of love in justice.

GREGORY DA COSTA, S.J.

The Gospel in Art by the Peasants of Solentiname. Edited by Philip and Sally SCHARPER. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books* and *Dublin, Gill and Macmillan Ltd.*, 1984. Pp. 72. $ 9.95.

What *The Gospel in Solentiname* tells in popular commentary of the Gospel text, this book expresses in beautiful coloured pictures painted, by the same peasants who commented the Gospel, in the early eighties when they returned to Solentiname after the overthrow of Somoza in 1979. The printed text that accompanies the 30 coloured paintings, magnificently reproduced, is taken from the four volumes of *The Gospel in Solentiname*. The pictures show us the Christ of faith of the oppressed peasants — not a Byzantine Emperor and Judge, not a Renaissance comely prince, but a trousered, bush-shirted and black bearded young peasant, quite at home in the life setting of the Central American villages. And so it is but natural that the angels should find Mary at her sewing machine, or that the nativity takes placed in a thatched hut amid the lush vegetation of Solentiname, or that the troops of Herod-Somoza should carry automatic weapons as they kill the innocent and violate women even today, or that Coca Cola bottles should grace the table of Herod as the Baptist's head is brought in, or that a colourful cassocked prelate should pass by the wounded man attended by a revolutionary samaritan, or that the banners of the Palm-Sunday procession should shout, among other things, "Down with Somozism!" or that Pilate should speak from a Church portico! To these people the Gsopel and Jesus are a living reality. They teach us all.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Vida y Reflexion. Aportes de la teologia de la liberacion al pensamiento teologico actual. By various authors. *Lima, Centro de Estudios y Publicaciones (CEP)*, 1983. Pp. 314. No price given.

For the last fifteen years or so Liberation Theology has been popularly identified as Latin American theology. This is misleading although it is true that this fertile movement in the Church, today at the heart of a world-wide controversy, emerged from specific pastoral and popular movements in the Latin American subcontinent. More and more people are becoming aware that Liberation Theology is an enrichment for the whole Church. In this book 15 eminent theologians from *outside* Latin America make their own contributions to the movement. One of them comes from Africa, three from Asia (S. Rayan from India, A. Pieris from Sri Lanka and bishop J.X. Labayen from the Philippines), five from the the North American subcontinent and six from Europe. Two of them are bishops and one is a woman. There is here a variety of reflexions but a common concern to interpret the Gospel in terms of full liberation and to go beyond attitudes of charitable action to a concern for tackling seriously the societal roots of human injustice. Many of the authors refer themselves specifically and gratefully to Gustavo Gutierrez. As bishop Iniesta of Madrid says: "I want to express my conviction that the Latin American churches, their theology, pastoral activity and testimony, are today for Christians all over the world a sign of God, who calls us to walk in a particular direction, to make definite options and to commit ourselves to the tasks outlined broadly in Vatican II, in the Synod of Bishops and the Meetings of Medellin and Puebla, and I know that liberation theology has made an effort to articulate these broad outlines into a system of thought and a programme for pastoral and Christian life" (294). While several authors establish a critique of superficial and alienating forms of Christian piety (including a severe criticism of the charismatic movement by the African theologian), many stress the importance of the people in the liberation movement. Liberation theology, like liberation consciousness,

comes from the grassroots, and is fed by the basic communities.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Galilean Journey. The Mexican-American Promise By Virgil ELIZONDO. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books* 1983 Pp xii-147 US $ 6.95.

This book is a theological meditation on the reality and the history of the "American Mexicans", i.e. the large groups of people of Spanish-Mexican mestizo origin living as a marginalized and somewhat despised community within the borders and the culture of the United States. The key theological concept is the *Galilean* origin of Jesus and the Church. For the author Galilee stands as a symbol of the marginalized and despised minority, even as a symbol of "mestizaje", of racial mixture. Out of such origin the power of God is manifested. Galilee, Jerusalem and the Resurrection show how the reality of the marginalized existence becomes a prophetic challenge for the establishment, and the source for the emergence of a new and universal people. The analyses, both historical and theological, are somewhat one-sided, but the reflexion as a whole gives us an insight into the message of Jesus and his relevance for despised minorities. In this the book falls within the tradition of liberation theology.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Christ in a Poncho By Adolfo PÉREZ ESQUIVEL. *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1983. Pp iv-139. $ 6.95

This translation from a 1981 French book presents the thought and activities of the 1980 Nobel Peace Prize winner, an Argentinian artist who together with Helder Camera represents the Christian option for non-violent action in Latin America. When I visited him at his home last year the first thing that struck me was an impressive statue of Gandhiji made by him, adorning his garden. Adolfo's life has in fact been much inspired by the Mahatma, by Martin Luther King and by the European Gandhian Lanza del Vasto. He is the organizer of a service, which he calls Peace and Justice, coordinating much of the non-violent resistence to injustice and dictatorships in Latin America. When his name as the Nobel Prize laureate was announced in 1980 it caused much embarassment to the then military government of Argentina; he had been imprisoned and tortured in his own country! Pérez Esquivel's service became the loudspeaker for the movement of the "Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo" when they protested for years, week after week against the disappearence of their sons and dear ones. I think it would be possible to show a connection between the Peace and Justice service and the political evolution in Argentina in the last year. Pérez Esquivel is not a charismatic leader, but a coordinator, and here lies the strength of his work. "True, he says, the elephant is stronger. But the ants... well, there are more of us". This book contains a short account of his life and work, and a collection of documents related to him or coming from him. The "Latin America's charter of non-violence" (1977) will interest activists and theologians in India. And Pérez Esquivel's acceptance speech of the Nobel Prize will show us an artist who becomes the voice of a continent, and is deeply imbued with the Gospel spirituality.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

World Issues

Of War and Love By Dorothee SÖLLE. *Maryknoll New York, Orbis Books*, 1983 Pp xiv-172. $ 7.95

This is a passionate and therefore a truthful book. It consists of a selection of short occasional writings and poems by a rare and sensitive German theologian who teaches part-time at the Union Theological Seminary in New York. The first section of the book centers around the question of the modern arms race and calls for a rebellion from below against the militarism of Western societies — a rebellion which means courage to make oneself known, an effort to "mix things up" as Jesus mixed up the values of his society, and the organization of illegal and non-violent resistance to the present madness. Like Jesus, says the author, we must learn to live without protection and therefore not be afraid of unilateral disarmament, the only real way out. The second part focuses mostly on the peoples' struggles for a dignified life in Latin America and the need of solidarity in this struggle on the part of Christians in the Western world. With rare insight she shows the connection between the psychological problems of the first world and the economic injustices in the third. "Economics, politics, and

culture make up a unity Psychotherapeutic methods what neglect that unity and focus only on the inner life produce nothing but psychological dependency Psychology today is the opium of the middle class, an opium tht denies this unity We can learn more from the resistance of oppressed peoples who, with their simple, old-fashioned ("moral") language, speak for us too and help us organize resistance" (126) Milton Friedman and the Trilateral Commission are denounced for what they are This is a powerful, if at time repetitious, collection spelling out political options for Christians in the world of today

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

A Gospel for the Cities By Benjamin TONNA *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp xviii-203 $ 10 95

The subject-matter of this study is clearly important and deserves close attention by concerned Christians The book presents itself as "A Socio-Theology of Urban Ministry" (subtitle) and is specially concerned with Third World cities For all the importance that villages have in most of the agriculture-based, Third World, one can argue that even there cities are the focal point of ideas, of political power and of social change The study presented here derives much from the sociology of the cities as found in sources written mostly in English or Italian The picture that emerges is somewhat diffused, lacking in clear outlines The second part of the study ("The Third World and Urban Mission", pp 115-194) offers a more theological attempt at reading the situation But this reader closed the book wishing for a more insightful study of such a fascinating topic

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

World Citizen. Action for Global Justice By Adam Daniel CORSON-FINNERTY *Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books*, 1982 Pp xii-178 $ 6 95

"This book is about some of the world-sized problems we face as world citizens. pollution, nuclear armaments, economic injustice, discrimination, and denial of human rights, just to name a few" (p 5) It starts with two chapters on economic justice, studied from the perspective of colonial history and post-colonial economic structures. Written in a forthright and simple manner by a person involved in pressing world problems, the book offers us a mine of information available in official documents but not easily accessible to the average person Although primarily addressed to a US readership, the analyses of the problems keep a global perspective and the concrete examples come from all over the world The last two chapters deal with the strengths and the weakness of the UNO and related organisms, and the various other openings for citizen action beyond that of governments, The last third of the book is a kind of appendix giving a commented bibliography, mostly from the seventies, on the burning issues studied in the book, and a useful list of organizations, international or North-American, whic hone may join to further effectively the cause of world citizenship Amnesty International is one of them, of which a glowing account is given to us in the text. I think that this book is a useful introduction to the study of world issues of international peace and justice and opens up avenues along which individual and collective concern may express itself

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J

Religions

Religions of India Foreword by Dr KARAN SINGH *New Delhi, Clarion Books*, 1983 Pp 308. Rs 355

India is both the mother and the receiver of religions From her were born Hinduism, Buddhism, Jainism and Sikhism By her were received Judaism, Christianity, Zoroastrianism (Parsiism), and Islam. The Indian soul has often been described as the most religious on earth Temples and pilgrimage centres abound, they are still thronged by devotees, churches and shrines are packed to capacity, each Friday mosques and dargahs are filled with pious Muslims.

We owe the idea and much of the making of this book to Dr Karan Singh. It actually is a small encyclopaedia of the religions as found in India. It has been brought out in quite a lavish way, and 137 illustrations, all in black-and-white, enrich it, an average of 17 for each religion described.

Each contributor was left free to conceive and execute the presentation of the religion concerned, his own. Yet each article follows both the doctrinal and historical approach. Religious contributions to the fine arts are not overlooked. After each chapter there is

a selection of passages from the relevant scriptures, a list of festivals and a short bibliography.

One could not expect that the treatment of each religion be completes Hinduism is too vast and too diverse to be covered in 50 pages Fr G Gispert-Sauch S.J. managed to squeeze into 24 pages all what a moderately educated man needs to know about Christianity in India. The ancient oriental churches of India are not overlooked therein, and modern ecumenism is given its share

Useful indexes, of names, place-names and subjects, were not forgotten, all the more needed because of the encyclopaedic character of the volume

E R HAMBYE S J

Crisis and Religious Renewal in the Brahmo Samaj (1860-1884) By Frans L DAMEN *Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta*, 9 *Katholieké Universiteit Leuven*, 1983 Pp. xii-368. Rs 150 (Available from M C. Chacko, 65-C Prasad Nagar, Karol Bagh, New Delhi 5).

This is a detailed account of 25 years of the life of the Brahmo Samaj/New Dispensation, under the charismatic and somewhat chaotic leadership of Keshub Chandra Sen The book relies largely on original documents, either archival material or contemporary reports, journals or books of different kinds. The result is a very reliable and thorough account of the various phases of the movement spearheaded by KCS, a necessary background in the evaluation of his own theology His creativity, his eclectic character, his deep mystical leanings, are evident in these years of renewal His efforts at introducing practices clearly inspired by Christian traditions within the Brahmo movement did not add to his credibility. Perhaps the New Dispensation was not sufficiently rooted within the subsoil of the Indian tradition. Moreover in his search for mysticism and new forms of spirituality he forgot the social concerns that had been so prominent at the birth of the Brahmo Samaj movement. Both factors combined spelt the death warrant of the movement. This book will remain an important source for the study of the fascinating character of Keshab.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

The Religious System of the Munda Tribe. By A. VAN EXEM, S.J. *St. Augustin Haus Völker und Kulturen* 1982. Pp. 279. Rs 80 (Available from Satya Bharati, Ranchi 834001).

Published in the prestigious German collection *Collectanea Instituti Anthropos*, this book gives a comprehensive and indepth account of the religious mentality of a Chotanagpur tribe which numbers about 800.000 members but is related to 16 other tribes with a total membership of nearly seven millions The study is therefore very relevant for the understanding of the tribal mind and a necessary source for an Indian "tribal theology" now in the making. It is also important for the more general study of Indian village religiosity, for many of the elements explored here are also found in the "Hindu" village world

The early chapters of the book analyse carefully and in detail the basic myths of the tribe, exploring the significance of its belief in a supreme creator God (*Haram*) who is also the God of the Tribe (*Singbonga*), and in the lesser deities (*bongas*) The analysis is necessarily hermeneutical myths are understood only in their interpretation, which remains always open Readers of the book may wonder at times whether the basic interpretation has or has not been influenced by a Christian theological a priori, for the myth is shown to be concerned with who made the world, how it has fallen, and who remade it and how, focusing on the mediator figure The other chapters explain various derivative aspects of the Munda religiosity its view of man and of the other world, its important sacrifices and colourful festivals, its marriage practices so rich in symbolism One will notice specially two important chapters: one dealing with "An Anti-System and a Parallel System" where the function of magic and of apparently discordant elements of the Munda religion are explained; and the final chapter where, opening up the Munda religion to the changes required in the modern world, the author re-emphasises the cult of *Singbonga* (as against practices concerned with lesser but dangerous bongas), and stresses the love relationship between God and the tribe and its individual members. Only through this emphasis on the primitive and basic elements of their religion can the Mundas hope to achieve both identity and growth. The author does not deal specifically with the relation of the Munda religion to the Hindu or Christian religions with which it is in

contact While recognising at times the influence of the former, made quite evident — though this is not always pointed out — by much of the terminology used, the author is strangely silent about the Christian presence and the way the Christian Mundas have evolved inside or outside their tradition possibly contributing to the preservation of the Munda self-identity I suppose that this would be the object of quite a different study

I am not competent to evaluate this synthesis of the Munda religious world It is certainly articulate and nuanced and done with sympathy It grows out of a long contact with the tribe and the literature dealing with it Of the 34 items of the bibliography about half deal with the Mundas proper (the article in the Hastings Encyclopaedia of Religions and Ethics is not mentioned) The most striking characteristic of the study is the serious theological reflection it makes on the basic myths of the tribe and on symbols, and the effort to present its religion as a consistent whole

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Religious Revival in Russia

Risen Indeed Lessons in Faith from the USSR By Michael BOURDEAUX *London, Darton Longman and Todd*, 1983 Pp xi-113 £ 2 95

"People like ourselves, who live in countries where there is complete freedom of religion, freedom of expression and lack of persecution, find it hard to imagine what life is like for great numbers of Christians and others who believe that those things matter but who live under regimes which hate and despise them." Thus write Donald Coggan in the Foreword

Modern Russia, Sovietland, is mentally and religiously a divided country Not only do the younger people not believe any more in the official ideology, but they are in increasing numbers attracted to religious ideals Religion and religious aspirations have not died out, their revival is a fact This could have been expected in a land where Christianity — in this case Byzantine Orthodoxy—has been so intimately bound with culture, many are being won back to the ancient faith. In more than one sense Christianity is much more deeply 'inculturated' in Russia than is the ideology which opposes it.

Two main factors account for such a situation. First, religion is kept alive by the common people much more than by its formal leaders; second, behind the facade of official atheism, religious ferments continue to operate. This is true in particular of the *startsy*, the holy, spiritual men and fathers who act as a secret inspiration. They managed to keep, often to an amazing degree, their ubiquitous, though secret, influence

Bourdeaux's book is filled with well established stories of modern martyrs They are found in prisons, camps, psychiatric clinics Released after years of imprisonment, they are soon re-arrested owing to their undaunted activities as unbroken believers

Orthodox Christians are not the only ones to suffer for their faith Baptists, Seven-Day Adventists and Catholics vie with them in witnessing to the Risen Christ Love inspires and leads them all, love for Christ and his Kingdom, for their compatriots, for Russia.

This is well exemplified in the story of the imprisonned Lithuanian nurse, Nijole Sadunaite, a Catholic like most Lithuanians, who told her accusers "I love you all as if you were my brothers and sisters, I wouldn't hesitate to give my life for any one of you" (p. 100)

In his epilogue the author stresses the ecumenical significance of the Christian revival, of its trials and deeply evangelical inspiration: "So for the Soviet Union Christianity will play a role in the shaping of the society of the twenty-first century There is nowhere else in the world where belief shows such intensity, having been formed in the crucible of suffering. Soviet Christians live very close to the spirit of the New Testament In them one day the world will rediscover the courage of uncompromising belief it has lost. The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (p. 111)

E R HAMBYE, S J

— *Cum permissu superiorum*

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII SEPTEMBER 1984 No. 8

In This Issue

A cynic has remarked that the Church finds it easier to do "theological reflections" on the media than to gird herself professionally to handle communications in all its structures and skills. Be this as it may, few can deny the popular culture of our contemporaries is rapidly becoming a mass *mediated* culture, and Christians, even more than others, need to reflect on the impact of communications on traditional faith.

To this end, this issue offers a random harvest. It offers reflections, more pastoral than academic, on the effects of various media upon the India of today. There are two pieces on popular fiction: V. Michael GNANAPRAGASAM writes about the Tamil short story, and Xavier MANJOORAN offers a more sustained critique on a current Gujarati novelist, Chandrakant Bakshi. Though fairly much has been written on Indian cinema, we felt that Christopher COELHO's personal account of how he went on to write the screenplay for a famous movie on Jesus Christ, *Karunamayadu*, to be very revealing. It is not often that one gets the opportunity to assist in the making of a religious film which has such a mass appeal. Then Jacob SRAMPICKAL shares some reflections with us on his work in theatre, which is being rapidly accepted as a most potent medium for evangelisation as well as development. Finally, Myron J. PEREIRA has some original comments on popular art, particularly as found in the comics.

The very mission to evangelise presumes an understanding of communications. Today we are increasingly aware of the ramifications of media structures, of group response, and of ways in which the message can be perceived. All this assumes research and reflection. The articles of this issue are one attempt to meet this need. How many more attempts do we need for a wider pastoral awareness ?

We are grateful to Fr Myron J. PEREIRA for accepting the responsibility for the planning and execution of most of this issue.

Short Stories in Tamil Magazines

V. M. GNANAPRAGASAM, S.J.

NO one can exaggerate the importance of mass media today Among the media, the magazine — weekly or monthly — holds a unique place Whereas the other media — the cinema, radio, or the T.V.— have their own particular time to be used and enjoyed, the magazine is at hand for use at any time, whenever one has leisure.

Leisure or rest from work was intended to make man come closer to God and to recoup his strength. The day of rest was one day in the week. Today work, though mechanised to a great extent, has become more disagreeable to man and he requires two days' rest in the week If he cannot get two days, he creates hours of leisure either at the end of the day or in the course of his work. During this leisure, magazines are read because they take him to a pleasant world of stories, cinema tit-bits, jokes, and make him forget his unpleasant world of work and duty.

Beschi Research Centre

In 1969 Loyola College, Madras, started the Beschi Research Centre for publishing and doing research in Beschi's works. As an additional service the centre undertook to guide the College students in reading the Tamil magazines critically They had to choose what they would read — short stories, tit-bits, jokes, essays —, summarise them and discuss their merits and demerits. The material they collected from some ten popular magazines was presented in the form of an essay in the 3rd International Tamil Conference held in Paris in 1970 The essay was appreciated by many and the Beschi Research Centre has continued its work, though it is now placed in St Xavier's, Palayamkottai. Every year a one day seminar is held by this centre on the status of Tamil magazines. The result has been published in the form of three books, and the fourth is in the press. It is these books which supply the material for this essay.

*V. Michael GNANAPRAGASAM, S J., is a Tamil writer and the director of Veeramamuniver Research Centre in Tamil Literature, at Xavier's College, Palayamkottai.

Tamil Magazines

The Tamil magazines — weekly and monthly — are countless. The weekly that has the largest circulation (6½ lakhs) is *Kumudham*; the others that are trying to compete are *Ananda Vikatan*, *Kalki*, *Rani*, *Ithayam Pesukirathu*, *Kungumam*, etc. Each of these has a stamp of its own, a fixed formula for its short story, in its theme and style.

Mr Maniyan, one of the present day writers and the editor of the weekly *Ithayam Pesukirathu*, came for an informal discussion with the students of the Beschi Research Centre when it was in Loyola, Madras. They pelted him with questions on his books of travelogue, which he answered patiently and to satisfaction. But when some one started to put a question about his stories, Mr Maniyan stopped him saying he wrote his stories for a particular group of (Brahmin) ladies who willingly read them in their leisure time, and so the stories would not stand any objective criticism.

The Tamil magazines encourage the writing of short stories through occasional competitions. *Ananda Vikatan* gives a few pages for stories by students. These magazines with their attractive covers, with the variegated contents — short stories, essays, cinema criticism, jokes, interviews, etc. — attract all sorts of people. Their influence can be gauged from what a great Tamil scholar, T. P. Meenakshisundaram has said: "Looking around the Tamil world one finds that the Tamil journals appear as the greatest formative force; for many perhaps they form the only literature."[1]

The Family

Most of the short stories centre round life in the family. For instance, according to our classification of the short stories of 1974, *Kumudham* had 68 on the family out of its total of 210, *Ananda Vikatan* 55 out of 126, *Rani* 19 out of 61, *Kalai Magal* 30 out of 55, *Thina Mani Kathir* 48 out of 172, *Kalki* 44 out of 152.[2]

The usual traits prevalent in the family like love, patience, forgiveness, service, are brought out in the stories. Here is a story on the devotedness of the mother. The mother brings up her only daughter with great difficulty, as the father is a drunkard who does not care for the family. When the child is admitted in the school, she is asked her name first and then the initial. "What is meant by the initial ?" asks the child. "It is the first letter" says the teacher, "of the name of the

1. T. P. Meenakshisundaram, *The Pageant of Tamil Literature*, p. 1.
2. *Itho Tamil Ithalkal* 1974, pp. 26, 1, 51, 57, 7, 13.

person who is responsible for your education". The child unhesitatingly says that 'K' is her initial, because her mother's name is Kamatchi.[3]

In spite of slow westernisation, the Tamil society is traditional, particularly in the relation between the sexes. The wife of an officer travels, out of necessity, with her brother-in-law (a married person); someone mistakenly thinks they are husband and wife; this is reported to the officer who believes that his wife is having illegal relations with his brother and as a punishment God is not blessing her with any child. The suspicion grows, till one day she intends to commit suicide in the absence of her husband, when she suddenly hears the cry of a new-born baby just outside her door and desires to bring it up.[4]

The dowry system is a perennial topic, usually attacked in short stories but followed in practice. Last year *Kalki* had this story. A young man insists on the day of his marriage that he should be given a Godrej almirah The parents of the bride procure one with great difficulty; after bringing it to the house, they give the key to the bride so that she may give it to her husband. She gives the key to him but walks out of the house. Confusion prevails. The mother-in-law realises that her house needs such a girl and so requests her to accept the key of her household[5]

Another problem is that of the working woman. In cities both the parents have to work in order to make both ends meet. But they face other problems within the family. A working woman is found talking freely to other men, her husband suspects her, stops her from working. The same day he finds that the Chit Fund company in which he is working is dissolved [6]

Perhaps as result of the fact that the woman is earning as well as the man, she is shedding her traditional submissiveness to man. The Tamil magazines have many stories and many more jokes about the women's domination at home. The wife rules the house, finds fault with the husband for everything, even for saving a boy from drowning "What is wrong with this ?" questions the husband for the first time. After this daring deed he falls sick. While attending on him the wife shouts at him more than usual. The husband promises that this first time he dared ask a question will be the last.[7]

Tamil Society

Injustice to the poor, the caste mentality, excessive trust in the lottery system, bribery, such are some of the ills of the Tamil

3. *Ithayam Pesukiratha*, 1983.
4. *Kalki*, 1972
5. *Kalki*, 15.5.1983.
6. *Kalki*, 7.3.1983.
7. *Kalki*, 11.12.1983.

society. These form the theme of short stories. For instance, a poor young man hunting for a job is humiliated by an officer for his inability to give a bribe. He therefore decides to wreak vengeance upon the officer and takes up the job of sharpening knives in the street. One day he sees the officer coming along the road, gets ready to attack him with a knife, but the officer suddenly falls down in an attack of epilepsy. The young man is moved to help him. After he revives, the officer grateful for the help of the young man, offers to give him a clerk's post, but the young man prefers to continue with the work of sharpening knives.[8]

Stories of humour not without a moral lesson are also to be found. A passenger in a bus is hesitating to return the extra sum of four rupees given him by mistake by the conductor. His neighbour with dark spectacles seems to be looking at him; perhaps he knows the fact of the extra sum. After a mental struggle, the passenger returns the money to the conductor. When all get down it is known that the person with dark spectacles is a blind person.[9]

Religions are coming closer to one another in Tamilnadu, although in recent years there is a setback in some areas owing to the incidents of Mandaikkadu and Meenakshipuram. Short stories with a Christian background or connected with Christian festivals like Christmas are written occasionally by non-Christian authors. Although there are inaccuracies in details, the main idea of these stories is to extol the services of priests or nuns. Here is one such that appeared very recently: A Catholic parish priest is educating a poor orphan boy who falls in love with a rich girl. Without informing the priest, both escape, on a rainy day which happens to be the boy's birthday. The priest meets the boy with his raincoat, requests both of them to come to the presbytery at least to cut the birthday cake. They are touched by his kindness and ask pardon.[10]

A drawback must be noticed. Most of these stories depict the life of middle class families, families that live in cities. It is a pity that life in villages does not attract writers. Some years back *Kumudham* published a story that depicted an incident during the religious festival in a remote village; the incident was the inability to sacrifice a sheep during the festival owing to the private quarrel between two rich people.

Christian Magazines

Though Christian magazines cannot compete with the others in circulation, their short stories are as interesting as those in non-

8. *Kalki*, 31.7.1983.
9. *Kalki*, 7.8.1983.
10. *Ananda Vikatan*, 8.7.1984.

Christian magazines. Out of those the Beschi Research Centre analyses, two may be mentioned *Manai Malar* and *Poyyavilakku*. The former is run by Protestants, and its editor is Mr R. S. Jacob, a well-known short story writer. *Poyyavilakku*, run by Fr Asirvatham, S.J., is meant for non-Christian readers and admits non-Christian writers.

Generally, the moralising tone in these stories is rather loud. A new theme for Christian stories is the question of inter-marriage between Christians and non-Christians. A Christian girl wants to go to the cinema, while the mother is unwilling to allow her, the father allows her. She is accustomed to go to the theatre with her classmate. Soon she falls in love with her classmate's brother who is a non-Christian and marries him The author of this story adds his reflections in a few paragraphs on the future course this family will take with regard to their religious duties, education of the children, etc.[11]

The Future

There is an association in Madras called *Ilakkiya Cinthanai* which holds a meeting every month to choose the best story in the Tamil magazines of the previous month It gives a remuneration to the writer, and certificates of appreciation to the writer and the publisher. At the end of the year it publishes a book containing these twelve stories and during a one day festival on short stories, it announces the best of these twelve stories and gives a cash prize to the writer This praiseworthy practice has been going on for the last 14 years.

Rajam Krishnan, a famous lady writer of novels and short stories, said in a monthly meeting of this association that such a criticism of the short stories will serve to bring out the best in the writers and make known to the editors the wish of the readers to have stories of high standard.

Kumudham is currently publishing a series of articles on how to write short stories, written by a brilliant writer of short stories, R. K. Rengarajan. And there is a constant feedback of readers of short stories. One can foresee therefore that the future of short stories is going to be bright.

Conclusion

"Man is a strange, paradoxical being" says Karl Rahner.[12] He is a 'doer' and not 'something done'. In the hands of these magazines

11. *Manai Malar*, Nov 1983.

12. "Theological Remarks on the Problem of Leisure", in *Theological Investigations*, Vol. IV, London, Darton, Longman and Todd Ltd. 1966, p. 383.

and their stories, is the common man a doer or something done ? He freely buys the magazines, but is a slave to their contents. Hence there is need of a vigilant, thinking minority to criticise objectively this fiction, and to let the publishers know the reaction of the reading public.

In spite of the fact that some of the short stories are not worth the name, in spite of the complaint that the commercial attitude of editors has reduced the short story to a formula, there is no doubt that the short stories in the Tamil magazines make the Tamils reflect over their problems in a changing world and thus help to spend their leisure in an agreeably useful manner.

The Humanism of Chandrakant Bakshi

Xavier MANJOORAN, S.J *

In 1973, a group of theology students in Ahmedabad studied the writings of modern Gujarati novelists, with a view to appreciating their anthropological and ethical outlook. The present study was part of this project. It is published here as an example of theological reflection on the modern Indian novel.

WE had been busy studying contemporary Gujarati writers. In all the authors studied we saw a definite departure from earlier writers, i e. the writers of the classical and the Gandhian age. The main themes of earlier writers were devotion and social change Modern authors on the other hand are preoccupied with depicting the actual situations and existential problems of man rather than imparting advice and moral lessons. Our modern authors insist that they write just for the pleasure of writing. They are happy and satisfied with expressing their feelings and describing their experiences Labhshankar Thakkar, for example, would say, 'Writing poetry gives me as much pleasure as eating watermelon; nothing more, nothing less ! I write poetry because I like it". People like Suresh Joshi declare, "Communication is not the aim of my writing. I write to express my feelings."

However, in all these authors there are some common elements which can be easily noticed. Man is at the centre of their writings. The sorrows, the frustrations and the loneliness of modern man are very much focused in all their works. Though these authors do not represent the majority of the Gujarati population, they certainly point towards a gradual change in its attitude, especially among the urbanized society. A good many educated people no longer stick to the Hindu religion in its narrow sense, but show a readiness to be open to different ideas and philosophies. Young people today are no longer prepared

*Xavier MANJOORAN, S.J., is the Director of *Asha Deep*, a centre for Gujarati youth at Vallabh Vidyanagar, Gujarat.

to accept a set of values and principles considered true for all times and places. They tend to accept the existential situation as the deciding factor. While trying to represent these trends of the urbanized middle class society, the authors have not been able to touch the vast majority of village population — even the educated among them. Hence their writings do not represent the mind of the *majority* of the Gujaratis today, but an influential trend among them.

There is a remarkable influence of Western writers and philosophers like Sartre, Camus, etc., on these modern writers of the contemporary Gujarati literature. Some of the problems and the situations they depict are more true for a Western than the Indian urbanized society. But in so far as these problems find some kind of echo in the mind of some people — maybe only in a very small minority of the urbanized middle class — we can say that the influence of the West in the writings of these authors is not entirely artificial. The seeds of the problems are the natural consequence of urbanization. What the influence of the West does is to sharpen these problems and exaggerate them.

Besides the Western writers, our authors are also influenced by Acharya Rajnish, J. Krishnamurti and the atheistic philosophy of Buddhism. So we see an openness to both the East and the West and a desire to cross the boundaries of region and nation, and to profit from every philosophy and culture.

In this essay I have limited myself to the writings of *Chandrakant Bakshi*. In the course of my study I have gone through most of his novels. It is difficult and perhaps dangerous to systematise these reflections. Yet one has to take the risk of giving to the sometimes unconnected thoughts a semblance of a well-knit system, which, it is hoped, will not look too artificial. The danger is all the greater as in Bakshi's writings ideas are not coherent, not only when all his novels are taken all together but even within the same novel. For the sake of clarity three major areas have been chosen as the focal points of our reflection.

1. *The Personal Man: Freedom and Love*

Christian thought has defined man as person, as an entity capable of self-determination and love by which he reaches the perfection of his being individually and in his social dimension. It is clear that from a Christian standpoint this freedom is something more than a mere capacity to choose between two alternatives. It is rather that internal dimension of the spiritual being, which posits itself freely in front of God. By love man enters into the I-Thou relationship and discovers in the other the identity of himself.

The denial of man's identity

Ākār is Bakshi's most celebrated novel. It is another of Bakshi's attempts (the first being *Padghā dūbī gayā*) in Gujarati literature to depict French existentialism in a Calcutta milieu. The title of the novel points to his conception of man. Man is just one more 'caricature' (figure, outline, shadow) vanishing in an alien nocturnal world. Yash leaves a jail to be trapped in the far more dangerous prison of this world. He shifts from one bondage to another. Yash becomes not an instrument in the hands of his jailers but a puppet in the claws of circumstances. Influenced by Ortega y Gasset, Bakshi believes that man is the product of his circumstances and environment. "I am I plus my circumstances." He stresses this point in almost all his novels. In his first novel *Padghā dūbī gayā*, Bakshi shows the hero, Prakash, trying to stop smuggling and lead a life of honesty and hard work following the advice of the heroine, Alka. But he finds such an honest life impossible in the present circumstances and goes back to his old ways. Time passes by. Man just stands and looks. He cannot *do* anything. He is helpless. He is neither master of himself nor of his destiny "Man is like a maggot struggling in the heat of the sun but cannot move", says one of Bakshi's leading characters in *ākār*. Elsewhere in the same novel he compares man to a hungry, helpless python lying exhausted in a glass box after its futile efforts to get out. Man cannot help himself, neither can he help others. True, he tries to help others, make them happy and remove their sorrows. But his efforts are like the effort of a "child trying to fill empty bottles with sunshine". Just as the sunshine will disappear and the bottles will remain empty, so are man's efforts futile.

Thus, Bakshi radically denies to man the possibility of self-determination and freedom. The ordinary man is of very little importance to history. Even if he does exist it matters not to the world. Man is just a shapeless figure among the myriads of shapeless forms in this phantasmagoric world. So at the end of the novel *ākār*, we see the hero, Yash, just disappearing into the night like a shapeless form. Man's identity is to have no identity. The influence of authors like Camus is clear, but the approach is original.

Love is not possible

Bakshi's characters cannot have long, deep and lasting personal relationships. Even the best of love and affection comes to an abrupt end. At the very beginning of his novel *Ek ane Ek*, Bakshi quotes Hemingway, "If two people love each other, there is no happy end to

it". In *Jātak Kathā*, the relationship between Gautam and Amrapali is like that of two intimate lovers. Yet it only lasts a short while. Both separate abruptly as if they have not known each other at all. Similar examples can be cited from other novels too.

In short, Bakshi insists in showing that lasting, personal and satisfying love is just not possible for man because he is helpless and selfish. Marriage, too, is not an institution where lasting relationships can exist. In fact, marriage destroys any real love and very often it is the cause of suffering. It is considered as an unavoidable evil and the death of art. Every marriage in Bakshi's novels is either an utter failure or a cause of great sorrow. All the relations are short lived and disappear like bubbles in the ocean of life. Love is a golden chimera, an impossible dream.

Sorrow — man's life-companion

Bakshi stresses human suffering very much in almost all his novels. It is the life-companion of every human being. Man cannot escape it and he is helpless before it. In *Jātak Kathā* he compares sorrow with oxygen that will remain with man till the end. He considers sorrow as the most real thing in this world. These sufferings are to be endured all along. The only way to be happy is to accept these sufferings. The real end of sufferings will come with death. Hence death is a thing for which man should be grateful to God.

2. The Ethical Man: Moral Law and Orthopraxis

Christian morality is still fighting for freedom. New horizons are opened while old conceptions and static structures are coming down. Paradoxically this outcry for more individual freedom is not a denial of the importance of an ethical conduct. More than ever today's man feels the need of an orthopraxis that may liberate him from the fetters of a rigid orthodoxy. The situation does not appear so clear among these Gujarati writers.

The attack against immobilism

According to Bakshi, permanent values have no place in this world. Everything goes on changing. There is no objective division between good and evil. This division is man-made. "In my world sin is not bad, virtue is not good", says one of Bakshi's characters. The supreme law seems to be: you can use everything (even the so called bad things, *kharābio*) if it gives you happiness provided you do not become addicted to it. "Live fully"— that is the main interest. One condition, how-

ever, is laid down man has to do it freely and accepting all the consequences of his decision (existentialist responsibility). But if a man is utterly helpless and lacks freedom, how can he accept the responsibility of an action ? Bakshi does not answer this question.

In general, Bakshi has no intention to treat sin or moral order in his novels. He has no clear idea of sin, though he admits the existence of some element (sin) which influences man and creates some kind of tension in man In *Jātak Kathā* the Buddhist conception of sin takes over the old Sartrean ideas Sin is a cheat, an external entity, a phenomenal reality without permanence, without real existence. It is man's creation and man's prison.

3. *The Transcendental Man: God and Religion*

It is quite evident that Bakshi of *ākār* cannot believe in God or at least God does not have much importance in his life. In *ākār*, Nihar says, "I have not expected anything from my creator". The idea of an evil God, of a God who masochistically plays with man's destiny is clearly a product of Camus' and Kafka's influence more than Bakshi's own experience "For me it is the evil God, as described by Kafka that keeps that (tiny frog) living" explains Yash's friend (in *ākār*). There is no doubt that Bakshi has experienced the problem of suffering in the world, but his approach to the problem and his tentative solutions do not look original. At times he accepts the existence of a *mahāśakti* No further explanation is given.

Jātak Kathā marks a different stage in Bakshi's ideological development. Here the stress is on religion understood in its widest sense There can be no separation between religion (*dharma*) and the profane (*adharma*). Whatever distinction exists is artificial and man-made Here religion and God are two different things. One can exist without the other. Namely, if we deny God, religion is not automatically denied. The breaking away from God and the pilgrimage towards the true "religion" takes the form of a spiritual pilgrimage in the book. Varanasi is the center of the first part. Hinduism fails to attract our hero. He leaves that place dissatisfied. From Varanasi the hero moves to his cousin's place, the symbol of an easy life. Finally, at the birthplace of the Buddha he finds a sort of inspiration for his life. He returns with a sense of satisfaction. The contention is that Buddhism can answer modern man's existential problems. Religion provides support ("*dharma*") but without binding man to a God above, without diminishing the typical existential responsibility. *Śraddhā* becomes the symbol of a weak generation (the word's gender is feminine), of people who need the presence of someone else, who need to believe

in the existence of God as a means to escape the existentialist's call to responsibility. *Viśvās* is the symbol of the liberated man (the word's gender is masculine). *Viśvās* is personal, whereas *śraddhā* is general and impersonal.... Its meaning becomes clear when we consider the two usages in Gujarati, *ātma-viśvās* means self-confidence, and *andha-śraddhā* blind belief. *Viśvās* is a word that depicts youthful vigour, *śraddhā* is associated with old age. From this reference in *Jātak Kathā* we can clearly see that the author believes in a religion that does not ask for a belief in a God who is beyond the grasp of the human intellect

Bakshi's ideas, lacking in consistency as they do, are difficult to classify Yet this orientation towards Buddhism could very well be another imitation of a powerful tradition that stands for the affirmation of a kind of religion without the apparent contradictions that God's existence brings along. In our secularised atmosphere one can understand this "discovery" of a Godless religion. Atheistic tendencies have been part and parcel of Indian philosophy since time immemorial, but Bakshi mixes antitheistic and atheistic conceptions. Sartre can be considered as a positive antitheist while Buddhism could be considered as an atheistic religion, a religion that expresses deep spiritual experiences in non-theistic terms. Using Raymond Panikkar's terminology: it expresses its faith in a non-theistic belief. Bakshi seems to ignore certain nuances, and his final synthesis is not very convincing.

Comment and conclusion

As I have mentioned in the beginning, in this essay I have discussed the writings of only one of the authors (Chandrakant Bakshi) whom we studied. Almost all these authors view man with a certain amount of pessimism and despair. They have more or less similar approach to man and come to the same conclusion: man is frustrated, alienated, lonely, helpless and drowned in sorrow. Anybody who puts his whole attention on man alone — man independent of God — and finds that after all this man is not omnipotent, but limited and helpless, is naturally driven to dispair and pessimism, as is the case with most of our authors. This, I think, is understandable.

However unacceptable such ideas may look to us, there are many positive values in these writings that need special attention from our side. Our traditional approach to man and his problems needs rethinking. We will have to admit that the "I-will-pray-for-you-and-God-bless-you" approach to the sufferings of our fellowmen is not realistic at all. Religion and God were made use of, like opium, to

pacify man in his sufferings. Christianity understood in the right way and the incarnation taken seriously will help us to go a long way in meeting these our modern authors. Whereas our authors can go only so far, the Christian with his faith in God and the experience of Christ who has elevated and ennobled human nature, can take the suffering fellow-man along with him. Sharing in the glorious humanity of Christ, he can show his fellowman the silver lining which can slowly become a ray of hope.

How Hindus Filmed the Life of Christ

Christopher COELHO. O.F.M.*

AMRUTHAVANI, the Christian Communication Centre for India's Andhra State, counts 84 members on its staff today. In 1974 there were just about a dozen and I had just promised to join the Centre. One morning I received a telegram from the Director asking me to come up there for an important meeting. There were two Hindu gentlemen with an unusual request: they wanted Amruthavani to collaborate with them in the making of a colour film on the life of Christ. *The kind of collaboration they wanted was financial.*

It is the practice in India to start working on a film with only a small portion of the investment required in your pocket. You shoot about 6 reels and show them to the distributors, who according to their judgement of the saleability of the film will buy the right to exhibit it in different areas. With their advance money you complete anywhere between 10 and 20 reels. It is always a risk for the producer, the most important stake being the original investment. It was for a loan of Rs 200,000 (about £ 10,000) for this original investment that the two Hindus came to us. Of the two men one was to be the producer and the other the director. The would-be producer had never produced a movie before but had only been an exhibitor (small theatre owner), and the would-be director had never directed a movie before but had worked as editor and associate director on films. They had also picked a cameraman, who had never worked in colour before, and an actor to play the role of Jesus, whose acting experience was less than considerable.

My opinion was quickly given: the most sensible thing we could do about this request would be to drop it neatly into the waste paper basket and forget all about it. The life of Christ was a subject that great directors in the highly developed Western countries had tried

*Christopher COELHO, O.F.M., is a gifted lyricist, composer and artist who wrote the screen-play for the Telugu film on Christ, *Karunamayudu*. He works presently at the Amruthavani Centre, Secunderabad. This paper has been taken in edited form, with permission, from with MEDIA DEVELOPMENT 3 (1981), "Film in India".

their hands at and not been able to do justice to, so what could we in India achieve ?

A few years earlier someone had made a colour film on Christ, which from an artistic and filmic point of view was a dismal failure, but which succeeded at the box office, simply because it was about Christ. (The common people of India have a great regard for holy men of all religions and this film followed the 'formula'.) I thought it would be highly improper for our Communication Centre to be party to another monstrosity like that, and if it was going to be a box office hit, so much the worse, because more people would be seeing Christ ridiculously and unworthily portrayed

Other Viewpoints

But Fr Wijngaards, the founder of Amruthavani and an incurable optimist who swears by the Chesterton dictum that what is worth doing is worth doing badly, looked at it from another point of view. Here was a most unusual kind of opportunity a Christian communication centre was being asked by a group of non-Christian film-makers to collaborate in the making of a life of Christ Even if it was doomed to failure, it was an experiment worth trying; and donor agencies abroad might be interested in raising funds for it

Fr Balaguer, Director-General of Amruthavani and another man of vision and a chronic case of optimism, pointed out another aspect still. "Clearly", he said, "their aim is to make money. Now if we do not help them with the investment, they will go and find it elsewhere and make their film anyway, and there will be one more horrible life of Christ going around But if we help them, we can have a say in the content and style of the film and there is a chance that the product will be just a little less bad than it might have been otherwise".

I could not say no to these And everyone agreed that I was the one who should work with these men on this film and that I should be the co-director. I was also to write the story, but I found it easier to write the screenplay I worked three months over this — the only period I can say I really enjoyed working, out of the four years and eight months it took us to complete the film.

The Story

The story of *Karunamayudu* (the title means "The Merciful One" or more literally "The Embodiment of Mercy") revolves around five characters who are seeking fulfilment and happiness. Barabbas is the political leader out to overthrow Roman rule and to establish the

Jewish kingdom by violent means. Judas Iscariot is his friend and counsellor, cunning and highly intelligent. Mary Magdalene looks for happiness in sensuality, fame and wealth. Manasseh, the blind man, is a sincere seeker who has lost himself in his honesty and is blind to all realities beyond the senses. John, the fisherman, is his friend who shares his intellectual honesty, but is a firm believer in God and His promised Messiah.

The paths of these five characters cross, and Jesus walks in and out of their wanderings and eventually they find their fulfilment in him: Barabbas is converted at the moment of his release from prison, Magdalene is brought to Christ by her own ennui at the achievement of all her goals, Manasseh is healed of his blindness in both senses, John becomes the beloved disciple, and Judas misses fulfilment on account of his ambition and his being a man of the head rather than of the heart. The teachings of Jesus most emphasised were forgiveness, non-violence and universal love.

Problems in Production

I must say I had little difficulty with our production team just because they were Hindus. They considered it a privilege to be able to work on a film on Christ. One of the musicians even refused to take his pay, and when reminded by the union people that it was against their rules, took it and offered it to a church.

I can remember only three points on which I had to make compromises on the basis of religion. The first was in the scene where Thomas says to Jesus, "My Lord and my God !" Everyone insisted this would not be acceptable to the Hindu audience. They wanted Thomas merely to say "My Lord !" I did not mind this, because the word they chose had divine connotations too, like its equivalents in English, Latin and Greek. Then in the final scene, of the Ascension, knowing their attitudes, I had left out the mention of baptising, and made Jesus say merely, "Go to the whole world and teach everyone the things I taught you." But they found even this objectionable and watered it down further. The third was their insistence on making Christ a super magician working miracles left, right and centre, as the Hindu gods and heroes do in their mythological films. I had great difficulty in making Christ a fully human being, and I do not think I was entirely successful. But this was due, I think, not so much to their religious attitudes as to their naive sense of drama.

This naive sense of drama and lack of ability to express themselves in film, especially on the part of the producer and of the man who

was hired to translate my screenplay from English into Telugu, were the most troublesome factors I had to contend with. In writing the screenplay I had meditated long on what Christ meant to me through years of study, prayer and reflection, and wrestling with it, had given my best to translating it into the idiom of film. The resultant text was highly-spoken of by those who saw it. One veteran award-winning film director and head of the department of direction in a film institute saw it and wrote to the Archbishop of Madras that it was one of the best screenplays he had ever seen and obtained a copy to make it obligatory reading for his students.

I had to place this screenplay in the hands of a man who did not know my vision, and for whose artistic and dramatic talent I did not have much respect. Instead of merely translating the spoken words into Telugu, for which he was highly qualified, he made it his business to reshape the whole thing, picking out what he liked, changing items and adding new things to cater to the front seats, with scant concern for the etymology of film. I had to fight all the time to preserve what I could of my vision It was a most frustrating and painful experience

Karunamayudu is in my opinion a mediocre film, with a few parts done brilliantly (I think even better than in Zeffirelli's), many parts done indifferently or badly, and a few parts done very badly, like the scene of the calming of the storm. The reviews in the papers were almost unanimously favourable, some enthusiastically so A few pointed out the weak points of the film. Among the public, only the more aware noticed that there were things wrong with it

In seven centres the film ran for over 100 days and in 12 over 50 days. Some secular films have fared much better than this, but in box-office terms this is good indeed. Two television stations have shown the film. One bishop told us, "Amruthavani with this one film has reached out with the message of Christ to more non-Christians in Andhra than all the bishops of Andhra with all their priests, sisters and catechists together." I don't think this was an exaggeration.

The film has appeared in three of the main languages of South India. The Hindi version, which will take it to practically all of North India, is being completed.

What I find more satisfying than the box-office success is the fact that the film spoke to our people. When Europeans and Americans make biblical films, no matter how authentic the costumes and sets may be and how artistic the direction and the photography, the atmosphere they evoke is anything but oriental. The gestures, the mannerisms, the twists of sequence, are all Western. But *Karunamayudu* spoke

the 'language' of our people, though haltingly and with many flaws, in a way that Cecil B. de Mille, Dino de Laurentiis or Franco Zeffirelli did not. Part of this 'language' included melodrama and many bottles of theatrical blood used for the crucifixion scene, which evoked tears galore in the cinema, and which I thought was cheap. But it has been noticed that in places where the film is showing, the churches and Christian shrines are more frequented by non-Christians who come to pray or to ask about Christ.

One of the more beautiful moments came recently, two-and-a-half years after the agony of the film production was over, when someone happened to be talking to me about a series of mass baptisms conducted in certain villages, and added casually, "it all started with *Karunamayudu.*"

The Play's The Thing... The Pastoral Uses of Drama as an Effective Medium of Communication

Jacob Srampickal, S J

COMMUNICATION in the Church has always been pulpit-oriented especially in the Indian Church. My attempt in this article will be to look at the inherent possibilities of drama for effective communication, to examine attempts made in the Indian Church in this regard, and to suggest ways and means to promote the use of drama in pastoral situations — all these based on my own experience in North Bihar village parishes.

The Immense Popularity of Drama in the Country

Of all the media of communication around us today, drama may be the most easily available medium everywhere in India. Easily available, because to produce a play nothing else is needed than some interested people A play can easily be produced, without electronic gadgetry and expensive preparations if a few committed people are ready to give their time and talent

Unlike the other media, drama was born and embedded in Indian culture right from the days of the early Sanskrit theatre movement. A little after Aristotle had laid the foundation structures of drama in the 4th century B. C., Bharatmuni came up with an independent interpretation of drama in the 1st century B C According to an ancient legend, God himself ordered Bharatmuni to gather dialogue from the Rig Veda, song from the Sama Veda, acting from the Yajur Veda and *rasa* (taste) from the Atharva Veda, to create a fifth Veda: the *nāṭya veda* or drama. While Aristotle insisted that drama seeks to purge the spectator of certain passions, Bharatmuni maintained that drama invites the audience to the most refined enjoyment of sentiments. Bharatmuni's *Nāṭyaśāstra* explains that the art of nāṭya aims at creating a *rasa* a taste of various emotions. There are nine such basic rasas.: erotic,

*Jacob Srampickal, S J 's first love is rural theatre and group media, and he has written and produced numerous scripts for villages in Bihar. He is presently based at Ravi, the media wing of the Navjyoti Niketan Pastoral Centre, Patna.

pathetic, heroic, odious, comic, furious, terrible, marvellous and pious. According to an ancient saying, *kāvyesu ramyam nātakam*, drama is the most beautiful of all arts.

Drama is a composite art. It can include elements of various other arts Like T. V and films, drama too relies heavily on the talents of a script writer. Scripting of creative and innovative sequences, lively and meaningful dialogue and suggestive *mise-en-scène* are needed for a good play. Other elements like songs, poetry music, sound effects, and above all acting talent, embellish a play production. Hence it is right to say that a play uses most of the media talents.

What above all makes village drama more effective than other media is *the fact that it is produced by the people themselves, in their* own place, with their own actors. When one sees familiar situations and faces on the stage, one finds it easier to concentrate. gets a feeling of personal intimacy with the action, and is involved in the happenings on the stage In such a case effective communication is possible. If the situations presented *on the stage are factual*, with carefully observed detail, the audience will surely take a liking for the play. In order to educate the audience, it is not enough that it take a liking for the play. There must be a thought-provoking and action-oriented thrust. It is up to the producer of the play to provide what is called a "documentary *twist" to the play that will enlighten the audience.*

Because of all these reasons, while television and video sets are making the rounds even in villages, drama has not lost its immense popularity in the country.

Popular dramas: an overview

Plays abound in North Bihar villages. Each village has its own public stage, settings, costumes, actors and even playwrights. Annually, at festivals like Holi, Durga Puja, Sarasvati Puja, and Deevali, and other important days like Independence Day, Gandhi Jayanti and Ambedkar Jayanti, one or two dramas must be staged at night, even if poorly rehearsed. A play is staged in a village chiefly to entertain. Slapstick comedy is quite common. With dances, songs and the very dramatic style of expression so common to these villagers, a drama turns out to be a sumptuous meal of fun and frolic. Acting is often exaggerated, loud and high-pitched, and the movements on the stage staccato and unplanned. *But the play goes on all night.* interspersed with other comic items, dances and songs.

Three types of play are popular in these villages. *Religious plays*: Often staged at Hindu festivals, these plays draw inspiration from

Hindu scriptures. Mythological characters like Ram, Sita, Ravan, Savitri, Prahlad, Krishna, Harischandra, Sarvan Kumar and many others from the Puranas and epics come alive in colourful costumes and gaudy make-up. Marked by exaggeration, these plays extol the heroic virtues of the gods, goddesses and heroes.

Social plays: A lot of social evils have been exposed through plays *The evils of the zamindari system*, dowry system and dacoitry have been portrayed in such a number of plays that they have become hackneyed Patriotism, the oppression of the underprivileged, the struggle for a new social order, etc., have been presented strikingly. In these social plays. the portrayal has often been overdramatic and stereotype, and their story line is often so similar that they fail to point to the issue at stake clearly and tend to become mere enteramers. Drawing more and more inspiration from the Hindi films these plays tend towards the gorgeous and extravagant, losing in the process their very specific contextual character.

Historical plays: A number of plays on historical figures like Rani Laxmi Bai, Maharana Pratap, Shivaji, Amar Singh Rathod, Vir Kunwar Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Khudiram Bose, Shaheed Bhagat Singh and other freedom fighters are popular. These plays evoke patriotic sentiments in the viewers. But again, as in other plays, reality gives way to elements of entertainment like prolonged fight scenes, chase, sequences, and over-dramatic dialogues.

The Church and Dramas

Drama was never considered taboo in the early Church. By the 10th century A. D. liturgical drama was accepted as part of the chanting of the Divine Office in monasteries. Religious plays, termed morality plays, mystery plays, miracle plays, cycle plays, Pater Noster plays, creed plays, etc., were a means of educating the people in Christian life, beliefs, virtues, etc. Itinerant groups specialised in presenting plays at various places. At Christmas, Easter, Epiphany and other important feasts, the story behind the days' feast was unravelled through religious plays of this sort.

Later, Jesuits became great propagators of religious drama. In his book *The Conversion Policy of the Jesuits in India* Henry Heras speaks of them staging a Christmas play before Akbar. They encouraged plays in the class rooms too. In Germany they developed the baroque style of tragedy which was a major contribution to religious drama in the world. Playwrights like Jakob Gretzer, Jakob Biderman, Joseph Simoes, and others were instrumental in bringing about a

revolution in the concept of religious drama. They made drama a powerful force in teaching and educating the people about their own life situations.

Communio et Progressio (1971), the pastoral instruction of Paul VI, deals at great length with the involvement of Christians in the creative arts. In clear terms it states: "In a very precise and lucid way, the creative arts are more revealing than conceptual descriptions, of people's characters, their aspirations, emotions and thoughts. Even when the artist takes flight from the tangible and solid world and pursues his creative fantasies, he can give priceless insights into the human condition" (no. 56).

In general, drama may be the medium most encouraged by the Church even in recent years. It is worth mentioning that the present Pope is himself a playwright.

Christian plays available in North India

In North India, all kinds of religious, social and historical plays based on the Christian religion have been staged. Plays on Biblical stories and on Jesus, like "The Greatest Story Ever Told", "Dukh Sagar", "Charniwala Bhagwan", etc., have been popular. Christmas plays like "Christjayanti natak", "Gaderiye ka Raja", "Christmas Father", etc., have been staged in various places. Other plays are based on Biblical characters like Moses, Gideon, Abraham, Solomon. . These characters' life stories are imbued with deep religious faith. The lives of saints have been another source of drama. Paul, Peter, Francis Xavier, Ignatius Loyola, Father Damian, and others, are genuine examples of Christian faith. Their stories make exciting drama. Historical events like the reformation, the crusades, etc., have also been brought to popular attention through religious plays.

A large number of these plays have been written in English and then translated into Hindi by Protestant groups. Christian publishers like the ISPCK, NICTBS, Lucknow Publishing House, Christian Book Publishers, etc , have done good pioneering work in this line. Catholic publishers like the Prabhat Prakashan, D.S.S., Satprachar, St Paul's, etc., too, have made some attempts in this regard. The tiny booklets of plays brought out by the Protestant groups at nominal prices are indeed a great service to Christians all over North India. With a somewhat more polished Hindi and lively dialogues, these books can serve as excellent guides to make religious themes popular.

In the Indian Church, too, drama has tended to remain merely a form of entertainment at festivals. People think of staging a play only

at such occasions. As a result drama has not flourished into a medium of teaching, a medium of sharing the faith experience. The possibilities of using drama as a tool for education has not been explored much. A lot needs to be done in this line. In this context I would like to present some of my own attempts at using plays for teaching and sharing of religious experiences.

Examples from Experience

The social awareness drama

In this type of plays the attempt is to make people aware of the situation they are in, and help them reflect on it. Familiarity with the people and their living conditions is necessary before one can write a script for this type of play After spending a fortnight in a village, normally some important problem will surface. Making this the central theme, one can write a script that pays attention to significant details observed in the village itself. No solution to the problem should be given. The play is open-ended and it thus leads to a discussion. After the play has been staged in the village by the villagers themselves, a few questions for discussion are drawn out. Questions like: Has any one experienced something like this in his life, or seen or heard of it ? Do you agree with what happened ? In a similar situation, will you act this way ? What can we do in a situation like this ? What can we do about it here and now ? Such questions kindle excited discussions. Some promises may be made, or regulations agreed upon In this sort of drama people are thoroughly involved The drama never ends with the stage production. People are gradually made to feel responsible for what happens around them. Religious themes, problems of Christian life and faith commitment, etc., can also be brought to life through such plays.

Adapting Biblical Stories to today's life

Here is a story adapted from the Bible; a man, travelling from. (insert a nearby place) to .. (insert another nearby place), is attacked by robbers. He is brutally wounded and left on the roadside. For hours no one comes to help him. Then the local D. O. comes along in his jeep with two assistants. He sees the injured man, inquires why there is proliferation of dacoits in that area, and speeds away. A little later a priest comes around on his motor-bike with his catechist, on the way to a nearby mission station to offer Mass. He tells his catechist that if he stayed around to help the wounded man he will be late for Mass. And so they too speed away. Some time later a dhobi, a

harijan, comes along with his donkey in tow. He takes pity on the wounded man and helps him out. After this story has been enacted, the following questions may be posed for consideration: What prompted the dhobi to help the wounded man ? What social responsibility do our political leaders, our church leaders have ? Why do dacoities occur so often on these roads ? Suggest ways to stop such dacoities. Pick up some of these concrete ways. Assign tasks to some of the participants in the discussion In such exercise an action-oriented approach is followed As a result the participants think deeply about the situation, as they have to translate what is understood into action.

Teaching Bible themes through one act plays

Bible themes like love, forgiveness, sharing and concern, patience, sacrifice, reconciliation, etc., can be very well explained through one act plays. These can be effective ways of teaching catechism in Sunday schools. Here is an example that I found very effective. Based on the story of Jean Valjean in Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables*, there is the popular one act play called *The Bishop's Candlesticks*. A simpler Hindi version of this play, with a priest as the central character encountering a dacoit running away from the police, teaches the Christian virtue of forgiveness better than anything else that I have tried. The priest's love, concern and spirit of forgiveness wins the dacoit hands down. It might look a bit contrived, but it serves well to teach the lesson. Several other short plays either from a former author or composed by myself have been found quite useful in teaching the essence of Christianity to rural and urban audiences alike

Full length plays on Christian themes

I have also experimented with full length plays to teach certain aspects of Christian life. One of my desires was to delve deep into the mystery of sorrow, pain and suffering. I wanted to explain, through a play, the Christian meaning of suffering. Hence I studied it from various angles, beginning from Job's sufferings. I found out what the great sages, ancient and modern, have to say about suffering. Then I studied Jesus and his attitude to suffering, St Joseph and the other saints. With all this as background, I wrote a full-length play in Hindi on the Christian understanding of suffering. The central character is a God-fearing catechist whose life is overwhelmed by various kinds of suffering. The story shows how the catechists struggles through the suffering, almost curses God and kills himself, and finally finds salvation. Through the story the problem of suffering is analysed and various reasons for suffering are suggested and scrutinized. I was

struck by the response the play received from the simple Catholics. They asked me to stage it again for them !

There are several other plays that I have produced based on Christian themes. I notice that the treatises I have learned in theology can be brought down to the level of simple people's understanding if they are clearly explained through the medium of a play. Plays on the Eucharist, on the meaning of the sacrament of Confession, Holy Orders, etc., can be produced if the writer has some clear ideas of the meaning of these Christian themes.

Observations

After having experimented with drama in teaching religion and for social awareness, I would like to make some general observations about the process. Producing plays at regular intervals in a parish is one of the best ways of keeping a group together. Gradually a responsible group of men and women can be formed. My own experiences in the parishes where I have worked is an evidence. Scattered and aimless youngsters were drawn to the parish hall for rehearsals. Gradually, during the rehearsals the idea of forming a youth club, a YCS section, or a drama club is introduced. When the youngsters realise the value of such a work, they are ready to give their time and talent to the group

A certain sense or order, discipline and responsibility emerge in the group as the time goes on. The constant insistence on punctuality and points of stage etiquette teaches the youngsters the importance of being more committed. They learn more about discipline in these rehearsal sessions than in any class rooms. In the course of time they realise the value of sticking to one's promises, keeping one's word, honesty, taking responsibility for even such simple details as bringing a match box to the rehearsals, etc. If time permits, and the organiser has the talent, this is the chance to start building a core community. From these youngsters the parish can hope to get leading Catholic personnel Proper guidance from the organiser will help in this regard.

In my own rehearsal camps I have come across youngsters who have been impressed and influenced by the characters they have been playing. Take the case of Raj Kumar. He is a tailor, rather well settled in life. He finds very little time to come to the Church as his home is 20 kms away and he has to work hard to feed his family of seven younger brothers and three sisters. I knew he is very interested in acting, and I had seen him perform at marriage festivals as a 'nach-chania' (a boy dressed as a dancing girl). I invited him to join one of

my drama productions. He came because he felt elated when I invited him. He played the part of Peter in my play on Jesus. He did the part of the repentance of Peter so well that once he remarked: "I feel like doing that part all my life. You know, Father, I too feel that I should repent that way. That is a part of my own life. That is why I can do it so well". Examples of this sort occur more than once. The closeness of the group creates the atmosphere for such spontaneous confessions.

There are several people, mostly non-actors, who have told me that since there are so often dramas in the parish, it is now nice to come to the Church. Many who had found the Church a drab system of laws and unattractive prayers feel that the plays have brought new life to the Church.

While I write the play I consult several of the leading Catholics of the area what they think about some parts of the dialogue. They help me give final shape to the play. Often their suggestions open before me their world-view and understanding of the subject treated. I discuss the issue with them and explain areas they are confused about. Similarly, before the rehearsals begin I spend hours with my cast explaining to them the content, the thrust and the message of the play. I insist that if they are not convinced of what is said in the play they cannot communicate it. Taking this deeply to heart they make the play's message their own.

One of the difficulties I have faced while presenting plays in these areas is the fact that womenfolk are not allowed to act in plays. Initially I agreed with this tradition and did plays with only male characters or allowed young boys to act as women. But gradually people came to realise that if the play has to be realistic, girls have to play the roles of women. Now, after three years, I have no difficulty in getting girls to act in plays. In the beginning elders advised me that our boys are not used to working with girls and that I should be extra careful. I took their advise seriously and explaind to the boys and girls the importance of working together, knowing each other and appreciating and respecting each other. I think that they are learning gradually. Today they realise that women have to be respected and that they should not be looked down upon as second grade citizens.

My group of youngsters have come to realise that drama is not a mere entertainment programme. They know that drama is primarily meant for teaching or proclaiming a message. The audience that watches their plays have not yet understood this fact. Such general

awareness is a far off dream Meanwhile, we keep our plays interesting with much lively action and catchy dialogue. The exclusive association of drama with festivals is gradually broken. Today not *many ask me why a play is being staged on such and such a date. My answer to this, that just as we Christians gather together on Sundays to worship the Lord, why can we not gather together after Mass for an educational experience through drama, has gradually been accepted*

Possible Occasions for Play Acting

So far I have looked at drama as a separate stage entity. I think that this is not the only possible pastoral use of drama in our Indian context. Before I conclude I want to look into two areas in our pastoral life where drama could enter the pulpit and the class room.

In modern street theatre, drama has succeeded in breaking away from the stage and the proscenium arch and reached out to the people. Drama takes place among the people, in the street corners, in market places, under the trees Our social conscientization workers have followed suit and have succeeded in bringing drama down to the level of the people Can drama be brought also into the Church, where the people are gathered for worship ? If we understand drama as a mode of teaching and instructing, then what harm can be seen in "staging" the liturgical readings ? With a little bit of practice the youngsters of a parish can act at least the Gospel reading of the day, and then add a short interpretative daily life situation to make the theme of the reading more easily understandable This has been tried in various places and found very effective This is nothing new in the liturgy. In the Middle Ages, play-acting within the Church was a regular means of teaching

In the class rooms, a little play-acting can teach more than many hours of verbal teaching by one person. Moral science, catechism, story lessons, etc., can easily be taught through role-playing. The students who are assigned the various roles are sure to learn their parts. As a result, the significance of the lesson sinks deep into them. A role-play is the acting out of a role or situation with a view to study the behaviour involved in an objective way. It helps to promote attitude changes on the principle that a new way of 'acting' will lead to a new way of thinking, and a new way of thinking promotes a new way of living. When a student is asked to play the part of a responsible elder brother, he thinks how a responsible elder brother reacts to a particular situation. This thinking helps him to behave as a responsible elder

brother. In practical situations, when he will be faced with challenges, the role playing he did at school will come to his aid. Because play-acting does not end with mere playing but leads to *much* questioning, the student learns *in depth* the importance of responsible living.

Conclusion

Like Hamlet who discovered that "the play's the thing wherein I'll catch the conscience of the king", it can be surmised that in a land where drama has a rich tradition it can be used not only to gauge the conscience of the people, but also to *shape* this very conscience. Through play-acting, Hamlet shows up the king for having been involved in the murder of his brother. In the same way, through the *medium* of the play, we can easily reveal to the people the situation in which they are living. This awareness is the beginning of change. Yes, the play is indeed the thing that can help teach today's audience, for in the words of Shakespeare elsewhere, "all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players .." (*As You Like It*). It is only natural then that this audience takes to play-acting easily It is up to those who have the Message, to use this medium to spread it.

Pictures on our Walls, Images in our Minds

Some Comments on Pop Art, Religious and Otherwise

Myron J. PEREIRA, S.J.*

SOME years ago, an American church group commissioned the well-known Indian artist, Frank Wesley, to paint a Biblical mural. As the picture was to be set up in a chapel in Tokyo, Wesley chose as his theme, Christ at the Pool by the Sheep-gate (John 5), and painted his figures in eastern garb and surroundings. Much to his surprise, the group that came to accept the finished mural shook their heads in polite refusal: "But Mr Wesley, we can't hang this up! You have portrayed Jesus Christ as a coloured man!"

A little episode, and probably *bene trovato*, but a significant one. It reminds us that "the pictures on our walls" reveal the attitudes, values and unexpressed desires we carry along — "the images in our minds". Not only do they reveal, but they influence as well. Our conceptions of God, of the saints, of heaven and hell, of angels and demons are all shaped more or less by the pictures we have seen of them — thousands upon thousands of images ramified so tightly into our subconscious that it is hard to say where culture ends and personal choice begins. Even prayer — at some level at least — is an exercise of the imagination, as Ignatius Loyola perceptively observed in his notes on "composition of place" and "application of senses". It is the fantasy which takes in and weeds out images and their associations. Why we self-righteously dub one kind "holy thoughts" and another "distractions" or "bad thoughts" is another matter.

In this article, we will look at two kinds of pictures: popular "religious" images, the kind we see in church and in our homes; and another kind of image, which can be "religious" in a different context.

---

*Myron J. PEREIRA, S.J., works at the Xavier Institute of Communications, Bombay, and is secretary of the organization of Jesuit Communicators in India (Jescom India).

Styles of Images

Theologically, what does the image mean ?

It is related to the twin events of the Incarnation and Resurrection. In Jesus, the "image of the invisible God" (Colossians 2), what is unseen. unknowable and transcendent becomes seen, known and tangible — "in the likeness of the human form" (Philippians 2, John 1). And because of Jesus, again, this earthly body becomes spiritual, divine, transcending space and time (1 Corinthians 14).

If this is so, then not just man himself, but all human and natural creation becomes a representation of the divine; and the divine itself is revealed in what is "merely" human. Everything becomes symbol, an interior word which is still "an inarticulate groan" (Romans 8), an immanent energy not fully realised. One of the functions of art is to release this energy and to ignite the inner spark. The image then can not only represent but reveal as well. Not just superficial resemblance, which pleases visually, but inner significance, the deeper meaning. Revelation, the "flashing of the inward eye" (Wordsworth).

In its own way, image is related to verbal symbol — parable and metaphor, story, *midrash* and fable Once again, it is a different mode of perception which is at stake here: not causal and sequential, but analogical. The story-teller tells the parable and lets the hearer draw the moral. The artist sketches the outline, and leaves the viewer to "fill in". Put in another way, such art is low on definition and high on suggestion.

Iconography has had a long and respectable tradition in the Church. Unlike Judaism and Islam with their taboo on "graven images", Christian art has always rejoiced in an abundance of natural and human forms. From earliest days the icon expressed this conjunction of devotion and artistic skill. For the icon — the Greek word means picture, image — is *the* religious picture par excellence, usually venerated at a shrine, painted in stark and intense tones, the fruit of many hours of prayerful contemplation on the part of the artist.

Icons are not usually pretty. However they exude an aura of religious energy, and to the contemplative and prayerful viewer they yield their riches — the communication of an inner faith. It matters not that the devotee does not "understand" the picture; his long and loving gaze is in itself an act of surrender, and it is this faith that "fills in" whatever is lacking.

Our religious pictures today are however of a different kind. Those that are most familiar to us come in Church Art calendars, holy pictures,

church statues and posters, and illustrated picture books. Such books, such pictures appeal to the popular taste. They are often pretty, and, as often, flat That is, they have no "iconic power", no depth, no intensity They represent, but do not reveal. Why is this so ? Why is so much religious art so dull and uninspiring ? The reason, one may suggest, is kitsch. Kitsch — the German word, means something thrown together — is mass-produced art, a product of our industrial-mechanical age. Kitsch borrows from one culture and manufactures for another It is pretentious and it is false. Kitsch harps on sentimentality and stereotype. Since so many of our "pictures on the wall" are bland and sentimental — the Sacred Heart faces with long brown hair and piercing eyes, the demure Virgin Marys, flat-chested in blue and white, the aged Josephs clutching a lily, the handsome Sebastians struck with arrow, the Aloysiuses, the Anthonys, the Francis Xaviers - they *reveal* nothing to us. That is to say, they merely titillate our piety, they do not evoke strong feelings, they do not challenge us to virtue, they do not disturb our domestic peace.

Real sanctity, on the other hand, always is more than a trifle disturbing. And pictures of the saints, when presented truthfully, can serve to make us pause and think again But what, then, are we to say of these "pictures on the wall" which filter a passionless piety into our minds ?

"Religious Art" in Comics ?

Our own age is hardly a religious one in the same way that the medieval centuries were Medieval man was passionately faithful to his beliefs, but he was also a rabid bigot where the beliefs of others were concerned. Modern man, infected with secularism, is more tolerant, and also more indifferent. In many ways, then, in today's world, the religious has gone 'underground'. Its public profession is not always encouraged.

Yet, religious and transcendental themes appear in disguise, as it were, concealed behind the patter of mass media culture. It is the models in our advertisements, and the stars of our cinema and TV shows, which perform the same function as a "communion of saints", just as the modern beat show has given us what it takes to make "liturgy" come fully alive And in their own little way, the characters of our comic strips have re-introduced to us the idea of myth.

Myth — as Eliade defines it — is whatever "is sacred, exemplary and significant". It is easy for the conventionally religious-minded to see the person of Jesus and Our Lady as "sacred and exemplary"; it is

far less easy to see this in the character of the stars — in Amitabh Bacchan, Marilyn Monroe, Muhammed Ali and John Lennon. Nevertheless for countless millions today, Amitabh, John and Marilyn have provided "role models", or exemplars, in their behaviour and values, ni exactly the same way as did Aloysius and Maria Goretti. They give a focus to an adolescent's search for identity. They lend energy, elan and charisma to the dull routine of life.

The comic strips are the illiterate man's nose-thumb at books and letters. For cartoons and sketches have always been with us — not in the same form of course, but wherever man has lived and built, he has left behind pictures and sculptures to say in paint and stone what he could not put down in words The Egyptian hieroglyphs, the Bayeu Tapestry, the Ajanta frescos, Chartres, Khajuraho and Konarak all bear witness to the perennial human urge — to tell a story, and to tell it in pictures.

It is true that the mandarins among us never take the comics seriously. No matter, for seriously or not, comics are read. And in the process for being read "for fun's sake", values, attitudes and beliefs slip in uncontested along with the story. For every comic strip must have a story, and every story must have a hero — and a heroine too preferably — and what better than one of epic proportions ? Thus it is that the ancient myths find a modern grab and expression in the pulp fiction of today's newspapers.

For example, take three of the most popular comic book heroes of today. Tarzan, Superman and the Phantom. Like all the heroes of antiquity, they are *avatars*, descended from above and far away. Superman comes to earth from outer space, and the Phantom and Tarzan, whose origins are deliberately obscure, are portrayed as "great white warriors" in a dark and primitive continent, generally inhabited by docile negroes. Like other godmen's, their infancy and early life is "hidden", and only their "public life" is noised abroad.

A moment's reflection on the significance of the "hidden" versus the "public" in the mythology of the comic, and indeed of all folk heroes. Every hero, it seems, lives part of his life in disguise. Superman lies concealed beneath the bashful Clark Kent, the Phantom is always masked and hooded, and Tarzan (in the original) is the secret self of the English dandy, Lord Greystoke. What is it that must be concealed and hid from public view ? What is that "obscene" (off-stage) part of ourselves, which must never be probed by others, particularly by prying women ?

The disguise — or the mask — fulfils for our fantasy, what the "shadow" (a Jungian term) does for our real lives. It is that part of ourselves "away from the sun", which represses all that we are but would rather not be. Or all that we would like to be, but dare not publicly confess. Or whatever lives in uneasy tension within us.

Sex is one such potent force — any wonder that all comic heroes are virtually sexless, straight males ? They may rescue damsels in distress, but they succumb to no feminine wiles and entertain no romantic advances. They usually find solace in the company of another male friend, or others from an "inferior" race, who look up to them as Protector. The mask then is the simplest device to blot out all those ambiguities and ambivalence which all of us (heroes included) must grapple with in our striving for integrity. Sex, race, and the pressures of wealth and power compound these tensions. In the folksy culture, typified kitsch, all tensions and ambiguity is swept aside. Good and evil, right and wrong are as clear as black and white, and are as easily solved. The comic hero is expected to be good, clean and sanitized.

For if the stories of Superman and Tarzan fascinate us, it is because we still playfully indulge in a world whose "problems" could be "solved" with the bang-thud-pow of the Phantom's fists, or Superman's zooming across oceans in deadly pursuit of the runaway crooks. All our wishes for problem-solving — which one may call salvation by another name — have this touch of the miraculous. The miracles of Jesus will always appeal more than his teachings. And Superman the thaumaturge will always win over Socrates the mentor. Herein lies the perennial attraction of the comics: they amuse us with their gentle — or vicious - irony; they tickle us with their fun, they grip us with a story well-told in pictures; and they remind us, more subsconsciously than in any pointed way, that in an increasingly complicated world the personal element can still trimph after all. That a "personal saviour" in the form of a strong white man will rescue us from "the lion's mouth and the snare of the pit."

Of course our rational logical minds smile condescendingly at the very idea. But isn't there some tiny irrational fragment of ourselves that believes ? If only this were true.

Note

Utterances of God that Still Live

In 1974 Professor Hanson published *Studies in Paul's Technique and Theology* where he vindicated the validity of Paul's method which may at times look strange to us. In 1980 there followed a study on *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture* which intends to show how a proper understanding of the NT writers' exegesis can reveal their theology and background. (See VIDYAJYOTI 1975 p. 330, and 1981 pp. 193f respectively). A third study now completes the two previous ones[1]. Its subtitle defines the topic: The New Testament Exegesis of the Old, viz. how did the NT writers approach Scripture? Throughout chs. 1-8 'Scripture' is used in a restricted sense, viz. the Old Testament. For the authors of the NT 'Scripture' meant the OT. For them there was no NT as yet, "nor did they regard what we call the Old Testament as being either a testament or old. For them, it was simply 'the scriptures' ... " (p. 1).

The study begins with the basic question: Jewish Traditions of Exegesis (ch. 1). These traditions at times modified or even contradicted previous traditions. The Greek translators of the LXX occasionally interpreted the Hebrew original. All methods of Jewish interpretation (Qumran, Philo, Rabbinic) agree that Scripture is inspired and inerrant and therefore must be harmonized with itself. Scripture being intended to be used by God's people without being restricted to any particular occasion on which it was written, could be used out of context (though not without any regard to the context). Any passage may have an extended significance different from the literal sense.

Against this background, then, we look at 'the New Testament Inheritance' (ch. 2), the oral tradition of the NT, how Jesus himself used Scripture, if we can discover this; how the earliest communities applied Scripture to Jesus, seen especially as the Suffering Servant and the exalted Saviour; finally, how far these oral traditions have influenced the NT writers. — Before studying the individual books of the NT, a general preview is given of some of the leading characteristics of NT scriptural interpretation. We note first that the NT writers did take into consideration the context of the OT they used. Indeed, several of their OT references or quotations cannot be properly understood without paying attention to the verses preceding and following their citations. Further we note that the NT writers considered that the end time had come, the time to which all Scripture looks forward. Scripture can therefore be freely applied to Jesus Christ, and through him to the

1. *The Living Utterances of God.* By Anthony Tyrrel HANSON. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd.* 1983. Pp. vi-250. £9.95.

Christian church, the true inheritor of the promises made to Israel From this it follows that the authors of Scripture (OT) knew a great deal about Christ. Much information about Jesus may therefore be found by studying the OT, we might say that the Jewish scriptures constituted the theological textbook of the NT church.

The Pauline writings (ch 3) are the first to be analyzed, not only because the Apostle is the first Christian writer whose works have survived, but also because "he is also a first-class intellect, constantly, wrestling with the theological as well as practical problems in connection with the faith. He is one of the greatest exponents of Scripture in the New Testament, but he has perhaps been more misunderstood in this aspect of his work than any other New Testament author, because his technique seems to us so strange that we are constantly tempted to make him say what we think he ought to have meant, rather than what he did mean" (p. 44) The chapter examines Paul's debt to Jewish exegetical tradition; his vision of the pre-existent Christ active in Israel's history; the problem of the Law, and especially Paul's use of typology and allegory. Here we should note that "we must not lay at Paul's door the blame for the extensive allegorical exegesis that later Christian theologians used in order to Christianize the Jewish scriptures. Paul is much more restrained in his use of allegory than are many of the fathers" (p. 62).

Introducing the chapter on "The Use of Scripture in the Synoptic Gospels" the author points out that, as for Paul so also for the evangelists, the OT, their Scripture, was "a source of information about Jesus because it was prophetic and indicated the course of salvation history according to God's design" (p. 85). The Synoptists have much in common. "All witness to the common early Christian belief in salvation history recorded in Scripture. All seem to know a common stock of texts, going back to the earliest era of the church and in some cases reaching back to Jesus" (p. 89).

Regarding Mk we notice that it is difficult to distinguish between the use of Scripture which was already in Mk's sources and the use Mk himself makes of Scripture. Mk did use Scripture as illustration, even frequently, but he uses it also typically and christologically. "For all his lack of formal parade of Scripture learning, and despite his remarkable ability to conceal his own personality behind his material, Mark stands Squarely in the main tradition of the New Testament interpretation of Scripture" (p 70).

Matthew, unlike Mark, contains clear signs of the evangelist's personal interpretation of Scripture; v.g. in the use of 'formula quotations' which are intended to show how completely the career of Jesus followed the design of God recorded in Scripture.

"Luke appears in his two writings more as a discernable personality than Mark does in his Gospel, but he shares with Mark the negative quality of not being an expert in the scriptures" (p. 78). He does not look for prophecies about Jesus, though he sees the events of Jesus' life foretold in Scripture; he shows this through quotations or allusions to Scripture, v.g. in his hymns, the Infancy Gospel, etc. A

leading theme of Lk-Acts is 'Jesus, the righteous sufferer'. Prof. Hanson finalizes his portrait of Luke with this trait: "Luke did not have the profound scriptural technique of a Paul or a John, but he was well able to appreciate and to utilize the scriptural exegesis of others" (p. 89).

More subtle speculation is used in the examination of the Deutero-Paulines and Hebrews (ch. 5), especially regarding Colossians. — Though according to Prof. Hanson the author of Hebrews does not seem to have a deep knowledge of Scripture, nevertheless the Professor expresses his admiration for the author's "confidence, virtuosity and consistency with which he uses Scripture in the exposition of his lofty theme of Christ as the great and ultimate high priest No one else in the New Testament attempts so original an enterprise: we might almost call it 'the liturgical interpretation of Jesus'; and no one else in one relatively brief work manages to include so much deeply Christian interpretation of Scripture" (p. 112).

John's Use of Scripture (ch. 6) reveals an author "who has spent long years studying Scripture" (p. 113). Explicit quotations are relatively few; a superficial reading might even give the impression that the evangelist is not greatly interested in Scripture; yet, "the author was soaked in scripture" (p. 113). In this chapter Hanson follows a scheme he developed in the previous work on '*The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*'. He examines: traditional citations from Scripture; Scripture cited with an introductory formula (13:18; 11:24) or without an introductory formula (2:17; 3:14); Scripture that can be traced as providing the basis of John's Christology (1:1; 5:35); in certain places the words of Scripture have influenced the narrative (10:24; 11:41; 12:13). — John "in a sense is too subtle, too ready to find Christ anywhere and everywhere in Scripture . . John is tending to turn typology into allegory ... In John the word seems to be the visibility of the Father. Not only so but his audibility also (see 5:37), and indeed his apprehensibility" (p. 131). This could lead to subordinationist conclusions.

The Pastoral Epistles and the Catholic Epistles (ch. 7) are discussed together because they are considered to belong to the second half of the first century AD (in the next paragraph the Pastorals are dated from the beginning of the second century AD). — The author of the Pastorals shows himself to be more of a compiler than an author; he seems to refer to Scripture unconsciously, though at times he can also quote directly, deliberately.

Quite different is the approach of the author of 1 Peter. The source of much of his theology is Scripture. The Spirit of Christ speaks in the prophets of old. The author of 1 Pt also knows how to handle typology, but he does not seem to have been familiar with Jewish *haggada*.

The author of James seems to have had a very elementary Christology; his letter has but few explicitly Christian features. On the other hand he shows himself well versed in the Scripture and at home with contemporary Jewish exegesis.

Jude and 2 Peter are inter-related 2 Pt has made use of Jude and may be the latest book of the NT. Jude quotes or alludes to Scripture but also to non-canonical writings. 2 Pt omits these non-canonical references. *Though in 2 Pt we do not find brilliant examples of the use of Scripture, still, we may say that "2 Peter shows a lively interest in scripture" (p. 158).*

The Book of Revelation (ch. 8) *has its own interest.* Though its *author makes no explicit reference to Scripture, he uses Scripture "more extensively* and more effectively than any other writer of the New Testament" (p 159) His method of using Scripture is unique: he uses the language and images of Scripture and applies them to Christ, to Christians and to the Church as a whole. He uses profusely symbolic terms which get their meaning for us through Scripture only. Of all the writers of the NT the author of Apoc seems to be the one who is most at home with the Hebrew text and least attached to the LXX. Apoc truly is an interesting book. "Difficult and bizarre though it often seems to us, an understanding of how he (the author) uses scripture can illuminate his work. It is worthwhile making the effort to follow him here, even if at the end we are still left marvelling at his power and literary genius" (p. 176).

The analysis of the NT writers' exegesis of the OT (chs 1-8), as a matter of fact, serves as an introduction to the next three chapters on the theological implications of this analysis for us today. "The New Testament Interpretation and Ours" (ch. 9) is primarily a matter of hermeneutics. The question is exposed under four headings: 1. the meaning of the original author; his presuppositions ? 2. the understanding of any OT text by the exegetical tradition (up to the 1st cent AD); its presuppositions ? 3 the interpretation of any OT text by any NT writer; his presuppositions ? 4. the meaning for us, of any OT text and of its interpretation by the NT writers; our presupposition ? — For modern man the second and third questions offer the greatest difficulties: the interpretation of the OT by the Jewish tradition, and by the NT writers, both are based upon the conviction that the OT is God's inspired word and therefore had to be entirely consistent and compatible with contemporary religious opinion (both Jewish and Christian); yet, both interpretations may differ with the meaning modern exegesis may see in original text, independently from doctrinal motivations. The NT writers were looking in the OT for prophecy: their approach is Christocentric. Modern man cannot accept the view of the NT writers regarding the OT prophetic charism in relation to the events of the life of Jesus. Further, what the NT writers regarded as history, modern man must regard as legend or myth. — The same reservation is made for typology, though in some cases the actual question as to whether the event referred to ever happened does not alter the validity of the type. "In some circumstances the OT type may be more the product of Israel's faith" (p. 188), based upon God's truth or veracity throughout salvation history. Notwithstanding the differences of approach we have a debt to the interpretation of the NT writers. Indeed, they have given us a Christian interpretation of the OT, showing us God's self-revelation in Christ and indicating to us those areas in the OT which are most relevant to Christianity.

What is the Old Testament ? (ch. 10) or what does the OT mean for Christians today ? In both the OT and NT we see God revealed in the course of salvation history. Through the OT prophetic sections there runs a sense of expectation expressed in the form of eschatological statements, which by the end of the prophetic period tends towards the apocalyptic. There is no overall schema of thought into which the OT can be honestly integrated; only certain vitally important elements in the OT do find their fulfilment in the NT.

What is the place of the OT in the Church today ? (ch. 11). Christians today still do need the OT. We cannot understand the NT unless we read the OT. Christianity arose out of Judaism. On the other hand "the Old Testament, though not unintelligible without the New Testament, is seen in its truest and deepest significance when read with the New Testament as foil" (p. 216). Not everything in the OT has the same importance for Christians. Considerable areas of the OT are not directly related to the NT. Our criterion for evaluating the OT for today, is God's revelation in Jesus Christ. Finally we ought to be convinced that "the link between the OT and the NT is for Christians a matter of faith" (p. 222) Christ is the centre and meaning of the Bible; in him the revelation which began in the OT times reached its point of greatest clarity. Though the modern Christian may find it difficult, even impossible to agree with the NT writers' method of interpretation, and certain points of their belief, we do agree with their basic faith in God's truth and plan of salvation.

"*In conclusion, the writers of the New Testament and modern* Christian students of the Old Testament are engaged in the same task, the understanding of the Old Testament in the light of Christ. They share the same fundamental convictions . But the techniques of the two groups are different The New Testament writers used typology, *pesher* fulfilment, etc , indeed the whole paraphernalia of Jewish exegesis, the only tools they had for the task Our tools are the techniques of modern biblical criticism and the concept of developing revelation ... But because we are, like them, believers in God-in-Christ, we have enough in common to profit from their exegesis, to admire it when it makes sense in our terms, and to understand it and sympathize with it when it does not" (pp. 235f).

The main motivation of this study is not merely academic, it is also pastoral, viz. to help Christians to value the meaning of the OT for us today. This purpose was mentioned already in the study of 1974 referred to at the beginning of this review; it is also mentioned several times throughout the present work. "If we cannot find any ground in common with the New Testament interpretation of scripture, we cannot claim that it is possible in any reasonable sense to hold the same faith today as did the writers of the New Testament (p. 89).

In a review of this work it is impossible to give any even superficial idea of the detailed argumentation into which Prof. Hanson leads the reader. The reader will appreciate the minute analysis of chosen texts into which the Professor guides him to substantiate or to illustrate the argument. Several times throughout the work the reader is warned that the analysis of texts, especially in interpreting the mind or purpose

of the sacred writers, or in distinguishing which sayings go back to Jesus himself, and which ones originate from the earliest communities, is a difficult and precarious operation as it involves an inevitable element of subjective judgment. — In a few cases I wonder whether the element of faith both on the part of the NT writers and on our own part could/should not be stressed more in the analysis of the development of salvation history. Also it seems to me that certain points require a more nuanced presentation, more particularly in the case v.g. of the notion of OT prophetic charism by which, it is argued several times, *according to the Jewish tradition and the NT writers, the OT prophets were supposed to have had a miraculous foreknowledge of the events in the life of Jesus* It seems to me that the idea of a developing revelation (on which Prof Hanson also insists) should come in here

The title of the book is taken from Acts 7.38 where the NEB renders the Greek *logia zonta* as "the living utterances of God". Prof Hanson comments: "The phrase seems to me to sum up very well what the writers of the New Testament believed the scripture to be, and it may also serve as a challenge to us to decide how far, or in what sense, we can apply the phrase to our Bible today" (p. 5).

J. VOLCKAERT, S.J

With Respect. A Doctor's Response to a Healing Pope. By Frank LAKE. *London, Darton Longman and Todd*, 1982 Pp xxxiv-327 Price £ 6.95 net

Dr Frank Lane is an Anglican, who is specialized in pastoral counselling He founded in 1962 the Clinical Theological Association, which has trained over 12,000 men and women from all Churches in the practice and principles of pastoral counselling.

Karol Wojtyla was deeply involved in the teaching of modern Christian ethics before he became archbishop of Krakow, now John Paul II It is not difficult to find out by reading the pope's encyclicals, homilies, addresses and speeches how often his training in ethical matters finds expression. The human person is really the main object of his thought, concern and prayer. He makes a constant plea for the respect, promotion and development of the person.

One can understand how and why Dr Lake has become an enthusiastic admirer of the pope's main concern. This does not mean that he is a blind admirer He does not always agree with John Paul II's declarations, particularly when he seems to revert to the style of blanket condemnations typical of other times

Dr Lane covers a wide range of topics His treatment falls into no less than 29 chapters, most of them are rather short, never more than 20/23 pages, many having only ten pages or so. Among those chapters I find ch 2 on "The Pope as Philosopher", ch. 6 on "Ethics as Law and Love, Teaching and Practice", and ch. 12 on "The Mother and the Son" particularly revealing. It is also remarkable that from ch. 22 onwards the author deals almost insistingly on the English situation, ecumenical approaches, above all by the pope, and that ch. 28 is on "Of Jesuits in General. A New Thrust and a New Trust?"

Such a book will serve well professors and pastors, spiritual directors and counsellors, Christians dedicated to social work. It is refreshing, enlightening and nourishing.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

Correspondence

Evangelization and Baptism

Dear Editor,

We would like to react to Fr Angelo Devadass' article on "Evangelization and Baptism" published in the May issue of VIDYAJYOTI We have no doubt about the sincerity and excellent intention of Fr Devadass His long life of apostolate in three state of India has earned him credit with the Church, and the Lord is sure to reward his many years of faithful service We, the writers of these lines, are younger missionaries, with fewer years of service than Fr Devadass, so it is in a spirit of humility and deep respect for him that we offer our reaction to his contribution to VIDYAJYOTI and its readers For we find ourselves in strong disagreement with some of the assumptions made and conclusions arrived at by him and with the general trend of the article.

There are in it some historical inaccuracies. The author says that "historically evangelization came to India as part of the colonial movement from the West" The St Thomas Christians would stoutly object to this statement. Christianity, and therefore evangelization, originally did not come to India from the West and it did not come with the colonial powers Christianity is as old in India as it is in the West, and Christianity had been flourishing in India for many centuries before the colonial powers arrived But this is a very minor point in our contention

Fr Devadass mixes up elements which should be clearly separated. undergoing the ritual of baptism does not imply adopting new names, much less foreign names. And being baptised does not mean submitting to a system of laws, prohibitions and prescriptions enacted in a foreign country in colonial times. Here Fr Devadass is clearly unfair to the missionaries and to the truth

Fr Devadass would limit evangelization to spreading Jesus' message of love but he thinks there is no reason why those who accept that message should have to be baptised and become members of the Church, and that, *on principle*, not only when circumstances make it practically impossible for those who receive the message to be admitted as formal members of the Church through baptism Fr Devadass has expressed with unusual clarity a concept of evangelization which has become common currency among quite a number of missionaries of the younger generation. This view paints a new vision of evangelization, on the surface very attractive and very comfortable, both for the missionaries and for the new "Christians". We would even agree that it is quite reasonable The only hitch is that it is in complete disharmony with the Christianity that Christ founded and that was handed down to us by the Apostles. It is quite simply diluted Christianity To use modern jargon, it is a kind of self-satisfied "I'm O K , you're O.K." attitude vis-a-vis non-Christian religions

This new theory as advocated by Fr Devadass and some young missionaries, if allowed to prosper and filter down in the Church of India, will spell disaster and call an end to true evangelization. Hinduism, as Fr Devadass rightly points out, is tolerant. It also has a tremendous capacity of absorption and assimilation. Which means that if the present and future missionaries were to adopt the kind of soft approach to the non-Christian majority described above, "love Jesus, stay where you are, don't join the Church," then the Church in India, an insignificant minority even now, will suffer irreparable harm A Church that does not grow, because it is deprived of its inner dynamism, is condemned to become weak and eventually to die.

We are not going to rely on arguments of reason to prove how wrong this modern view is, or how right the traditional view and practice of evangelization Jesus Christ never said that His doctrine and His commandments were very reasonable. St Paul

and the other Apostles never tried to bring people to Christ and to the Church through the force of arguments or relying on human wisdom: "When I came to you, my brothers, to preach God's secret truth, I did not use big words and great learning. So when I came to you, I was weak and trembled all over with fear, and my teaching and message were not delivered with skilful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God's Spirit" (1 Cor 2: 1-2) We shall just draw our arguments from the Gospel, i.e., from what Christ taught and commanded. Devadass has appealed to St Paul and to Vatican II We too appeal to St Paul and Vatican II

Christ's teaching and command

Jesus' last words on earth — His very testament — were, "*I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth Go, then, to all peoples everywhere and make them my disciples baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And I will be with you always, to the end of the age*" (*Mt 28 18-20, cf also Mk 16. 15*) Even granting that these may not be Christ's *ipsissima verba*, they are definitely the expression of the faith of the primitive Church, enshrined in the Gospels. They are, therefore, God's inspired word The words of Christ took on their full meaning and were reinforced and charged with power by an outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the feast of Pentecost Moved by the Holy Spirit, as by a mighty wind, the apostles were scattered throughout the world, including, according to tradition, our own country, India "But when the Holy Spirit comes upon you", Jesus told them before being taken up to heaven, "you will be filled with power and you will be witnesses for me in Jerusalem, in all Judaea and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1. 8). The apostles were so commited to Christ's message and to His person that in obedience to His command they preached, baptized and braved difficulties and eventually martyrdom

The Acts of the Apostles

The Acts of the Apostles are the narrative of the beginning of evangelization, and how different that evangelization appears from what some of the modern evangelizers would have us believe Christ sent the Apostles to preach and *to baptize* and to plant the Church, and the Apostles were convinced that baptism was necessary for salvation "I am telling you the truth", replied Jesus, "no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit" (Jn 3 5)

On the very day of Pentecost, in his first sermon, Peter spoke to the multitude of the Jews. "Each one of you must turn away from his sins and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, so that your sin will be forgiven" (Acts 2: 38). "Many of them believed his message and were baptized and about three thousand people were added to the group that day" (Acts 2 41) In Samaria they believed in Philip's message and were baptized both men and women (Acts 8 12) Philip baptizes the Ethiopian official (Acts 3 38) Saul was baptized after his conversion (Acts 9 18) And the Church, through the help of the Holy Spirit, was strengthened and grew in numbers (Acts 9. 31, cf also Acts 10. 44-47, 16 15, 17 32-33; 18. 8, 19: 5). For Paul it was through baptism that one entered into union with Christ and became a real Christian "You were baptized into union with Christ and now you are clothed so to speak with the life of Christ himself" (Gal 3: 27; see also Ro 6· 3). Fr Devadass is afraid that baptism causes division On the contrary, Paul teaches that baptism cuts through all divisions and brings about unity Immediately after affirming that baptism makes the baptised one with Christ, he continues: "So there is no difference between Jews and Gentiles, between slaves and freemen, between men and women. you are all one in union with Christ Jesus" (Gal 3: 28). How sorely we need this unity in a country fragmented by caste, creed, culture and a thousand and one differences.

Now, Christ founded a Church, a visible Church, on the Apostles. He sent them out to preach, to baptize and to make members of the Church. Paul did not tell the sophisticated people of Athens or the cultured gentiles of Corinth, "Now, stay where you are, continue to be devotees of Zeus or Pallas Athenea, only place Jesus Christ in your pantheon together with them." Peter did not tell the proud Romans, "You can stay where you are, worshipping Apollo or Juno Moneta. But keep also the love of Christ and the love of neighbour". No, it was Christ and only

Christ, not Zeus and not Apollo. And the Greeks and the Romans, the Gauls and the Iberians were baptized and became members of the Church. And when the new allegiance brought them into conflict with the civil and religious powers of the Roman Empire, they were ready to go to jail, to the amphitheatre and to martyrdom by the thousands. Would the zealous defenders of the soft and cautious evangelization blame the Apostles and the first missionaries for the 13 million martyrs who shed their blood for Christ in the first three centuries of the Christian era ?

The Church does not come to destroy but to fulfill

It is true that the Apostles and the first disciples of Christ found in the pagan religions, together with incredible corruption, great virtues, which prepared the followers of these religions to receive the good news. There were among them disciples of great philosophers who had spoken words of wisdom, followers of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle in Greece, Cicero and Seneca in Rome The Apostles and the first missionaries understood the value of "inculturation" as a vehicle of the message of salvation, and the first Christians adopted — christianized — many rich values originating in their own Greek and' Roman culture, but they were also clearly different from the non-Christians, they were members of the Church.

This brings us to a point emphasized by Fr Devadass: "Indians are convinced that the Spirit of God has been active in India, in Rishis and holy men, and that God has been revealing Himself to their ancestors from time immemorial". We can very well accept this as a fact He reminds us that even Vatican II "expressed the same thought when it declared that the Spirit of God has been active all over the world, inspiring and enlightening all men of good will" True enough The Holy Spirit continues, even today, his salvific action in non-Christian religions preparing men to receive Christ Christ does not come to destroy but to fulfill. "Do not think that I have come to do away with the Law of Moses and the teaching of the prophets (substitute non-Christian religions). I have not come to do away with them but to make their teachings come true" (Mt 5: 17) Vatican II declares: "In order to achieve this (salvation) Christ sent the Holy Spirit from the father, to continue the work of salvation in the heart of men and to animate the Church's growth Certainly, the Holy Spirit was already operating in the world before Christ was glorified" (A.G , 4) This Holy Spirit makes use of the wisdom, values and virtues invariably found in non-Christian religions, as vehicles to bring people closer to Christ. Because ultimately, even if they never join the Church, it will be through Christ and through nobody else that the non-Christians will attain moksha. Christ did not say "I am one of the ways" but "I am *the* Way, *the* Truth and *the* Life, no one goes to the Father except by me" (Jn 14: 6).

This has been the way of thinking and the practice of the Church throughout the centuries. And this is the official teaching of the Church today. Fr Devadass tries to justify his new vision of evangelization by quoting, without any reference to decree or declaration, from Vatican II. It is easy, though unfair, to buttress one's doctrinal position by detaching one text from a whole body of doctrine. A text cannot be understood in isolation, but in the light of the whole body of doctrine. Vatican II dedicated an entire decree, *Ad Gentes*, to the Church's missionary activity which defines the official doctrine today.

The Second Vatican Council

The opening words of *Ad Gentes* on the Church's missionary activity are that the Church is the "all-embracing sacrament of salvation" and exercises her mission by proclaiming the Gospel, which she does to obey the mandate of her Founder (Mk 16: 16). Then, AG continues, "the apostles, upon whom Christ founded his Church, followed in their Master's footsteps by preaching the message of truth and creating new churches" (AG 1). Therefore Christ brings people to salvation through the Church. Cf also AG 5-6. The following quotation, though lengthy, is so rich in content and summarises so admirably the aim of the missions and the absolute need of missionary activity for salvation, that we are going to reproduce it *in toto*:

> The reason for mission activity is to be found in the will of God "who wishes all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, himself man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all" (1 Jo 2: 3-5), "and neither is there salvation in any other" (Acts 4: 12). Every one therefore must be converted and incorpo-

rated by baptism with him and the Church which is his body, recognising him through the Church's preaching. For Christ himself "in inculcating the necessity of faith and baptism in explicit terms (cf. Mk 16: 16, Jo 3: 5) simultaneously confirmed the necessity of the Church into which men are admitted through the door of baptism. Therefore those persons cannot be saved who though they realise that the Catholic Church was founded by God through Jesus Christ as something necessary, nevertheless refuse to join it or remain in it" (LG 14). Hence, even though God can bring men, who through no fault of their own are ignorant of the Gospel, to the faith in ways known only to himself — for without faith it is impossible to please God (Heb 11: 6) — the necessity of the Church is still imposed (cf. 1 Cor 9: 16) which logically leads to the sacred right to preach the Gospel. Consequently, missionary activity wholly retains its necessity today and always (AG 7, cf. also LG 14).

There are, certainly, elements of truth and grace in non-Christian religions, and Vatican II assures us that it is Christ that has sown them there, and therefore they find their fulfilment and perfection in Christ. "Whatever elements of truth and grace are already found among non-Christians as an almost secret presence of God, mission work frees it from the contagion of evil and restores it to Christ its author" (AG 9).

How different Vatican II sounds from what some modern evangelisers would have us believe. The Council could not speak a different language from that of the Gospel and from what the Church has been teaching and practicing for twenty centuries. If the apostle Thomas, Francis Xavier and so many other zealous missionaries from India and from abroad had evangelised us the way Fr Devadass and some modern missionaries advise, today he and we would be, in the best of cases, devout priests of Krishna or Shiva, with some nebulous idea of Christ and His love. Fortunately for us all, things have been different and we consider it a very special grace of predilection that the Saviour has entrusted us with the mission of preaching the Gospel, baptising and bringing people to the visible Church of Christ. "I have no right to boast just because I preach the Gospel. After all I am under orders to do so. And how terrible it would be for me if I did not preach the Gospel" (1 Cor 9. 16).

Mt Carmel Cathedral,
Mirzapur, Ahmedabad 380 001

Frs Leslie D'Souza,
Joao B. D'Costa, S.J.,
Pablo Gil, S.J.

Dear Editor,

The understanding of evangelization as incorporating people into the Roman Catholic Church through baptism (understood as and called a sacrament, with all that it implies), has the following disadvantages, especially in our country:

1. It leads to over-eagerness to make such Christians and that, too, unfortunately through enticements, especially to the poor.

2. Very large and disproportionate resources in personnel and finance are utilised.

3. It prevents us from reaching out to all in order to give them Christ and all that He is.

4. It prevents the Church from involving herself in and taking up certain very important and urgent issues that affect national unity, the welfare of the poor, the downtrodden and the discriminated in the country, problems such as communalism, caste discrimination, exploitation in its various forms, etc. The same happens often even at the local level in cases of smaller issues and problems that crop up occasionally, e.g. communal riots, minimum wages, harassment of the poor, etc.

5. It forms a separate caste of Christians, creating a division within the same community. It thus adds to the evil of caste (or "religion") in our country which is already plagued with too many such evils.

Catholic Church
Nana Kantharia
Sabarkantha Dt 383 250

William Macwan, S.J.

Psalms

Dear Editor,

Of course there is a solution to Fr Subhash Anand's problem (VIDYAJYOTI, June-July 1984): make a prayer-book collection of the psalms *you* can pray He himself acknowledges: "I would have no problems with over ninety psalms", and "I can and do pray some of the psalms" By far better this than to swear at the psalmist while reciting the breviary ! "Not valid", perhaps ?

Another good point he makes: if the psalms are adapted and spiritualised, they are no longer God's own word On the other hand, without spiritualisation they scandalise people, said St Augustine 1500 years ago *Inde dilemma* !

Anyhow, thanks for the support And "blessed is he who can put questions" (P -H Kolvenbach, before he became General !)

Catholic Church
Surguja, 497 335

L DE RAEDT, S.J.

Dear Sir,

With reference to Fr Subhash Anand's article on "The Psalms. Another View" (*VIDYAJYOTI, June-July 1984*). to say that the psalms originated in a different culture at a different period of history and so are not fit for our times is to posit an argument that could be raised for the Gospels and indeed for the whole of Scripture Millions of people of various faiths read the Bible today how many of them know the original tongues in which they were written ? Could not the knowledge of Greek and Hebrew be even a hindrance to read the Scriptures and profit from them ?

Every Christian prays in his own way and is free to do so, when is he alone with God. But the Church as a praying community has its own formulae and they are the Psalms Psalms have greatly enriched my spiritual life and I love to pray them. Of course some of them could be side-tracked if they are harmful to one's spiritual life

The I M S Study House,
Allahabad 211 001

Mahendra PAUL, I.M.S.

Dear Editor,

In the February issue of VIDYAJYOTI Fr Subhash Anand has posed a ticklish question. Commenting upon Fr Cherian's suggestion that if our Lord was asked to suggest a salutary form of prayer he would certainly refer us to the psalms, Subhash Anand seems to question the suitability of the psalms as an exemplary form of prayer He finds in them certain expressions, certain forms, which according to him are not quite ideal or universal On my part, from the mid-twenties when Fr Ambrosi, S J instructed us, college students, I have found the psalms an ideal form of prayer. Prayer is of different kinds: adoration, praise, thanksgiving, forgiveness, intercession All these are found in abundance in the psalms which are really very expressive and full of meaning God is represented as holy, just, all-powerful, all-wise, supreme ruler and saviour God is praised in the heavens above and on earth. God is thanked for his bountiful mercies God is implored to forgive the offences of men who are conceived in sin, and God is invoked to grant all our requests which are in accordance with his holy will. The psalms are not only a sublime form of prayer, but they are also the finest lyrical poetry That is why all *priests and religious recite the psalms in the name of the Church for all mankind.* It is true that some psalms seem to be expressive of vindictiveness or punishment. This can be understood in the context of the times in which they were written. The Jews were a tiny nation believing in one God, whilst all around them were nations steeped in idolatry and filth. Therefore God had to show sometimes that He would punish ruthlessly his people, *viz* the Jews, if they also fell into idolatry. There may be some psalms which seem to invoke curses and evil upon the people. But we must remember that these so-called curses were only temporary punishments, death of the body, never the death of the soul.

Yours sincerely,

Bishop's House
Mangalore 575 003

Fr A. J. TELLIS

Book Reviews

Scripture

Ephesus: Climax of Universalism in Luke-Acts. By *Francis* PEREIRA, S J. *Anand Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1983 *Pp*. xvi-304. Rs 55 (paperback), Rs 65 (cloth).

This doctoral dissertation, a redactional critical study of Paul's Ephesian ministry (Acts 18·23-20, 1) was presented to the Pontifical Biblical Institute in April 1975

In a preliminary chapter, after a brief survey of the main redaction critical studies of Luke-Acts, more particularly of the Ephesian ministry, the author indicates his own approach to the subject and the method he follows The aim of the study is to expose the importance of the Ephesian ministry, and to discover Luke's intention behind the narrative of the various episodes in the ministry, and of the Ephesian ministry as a whole.

The Ephesian ministry, the close of Paul's direct evangelization, is the climax of the book of Acts Indeed, in that ministry for the first time Jesus' command to preach the Gospel "to all nations" (Lk 24 47) was fulfilled when Paul decided to separate from the synagogue. From then on the believers, Jews and Gentiles, not only heard together the same doctrine of salvation but they lived together as a universal community of the 'saved', as members of one Church which appears neither Jewish nor Gentile, but universally one (cf. Eph 3. 6), a new community, a 'third genus'.

Luke's intention behind the narrative of the various episodes of the Ephesian ministry appears to be to present a basic parallelism between Jesus' Galilean ministry and Paul's Ephesian ministry, and "to portray Paul following closely, as far as possible, in the footsteps of his Master" (p.182). This parallelism, Jesus-Paul, takes on various aspects in the various episodes.

In the episode of Apollos' preaching (Acts 18: 24-28) we find the parallelism, so to say, on the level of the preparation to the ministry, viz. John the Baptist-Apollos. After having proclaimed a baptism of repentance and having announced the good news of the coming Messiah, the Baptist disappears from the scene. Similarly after having spoken to the Ephesians about Jesus and having exhorted people to repentance, Apollos disappears from Ephesus Regarding the Ephesian Disciples (Acts 19: 1-7) Luke draws a parallel between the Twelve apostles in Jerusalem at Pentecost, and the twelve disciples at Ephesus.

Paul's preaching in the synagogue at Ephesus, and his separation from the synagogue (Acts 19·8-9b) suggest a parallel·Jesus'-Paul's preaching. Though Jesus after the resurrection instructed the apostles to preach in his name to "all the nations", during the public ministry he went only to the Jews. Paul first went to the Jews, but in God's own time, he withdrew from the synagogue to preach to "all nations", Jews and Gentiles together. Referring to Paul's miracles (Acts 19· 11f) Luke notes that the "works of power" which God performs through Paul manifest God's approval of Paul's preaching, just as the works of power which God performed through Jesus proved him to be "a man approved by God" (Acts 2 22) In the episode of the Seven Sons of Sceva (Acts 19. 13-17) Luke finds a parallel Jesus-Paul "from the fact that the evil spirit acknowledges both Jesus and Paul, and also from the parallel effects on the people after the miraculous events" (p 187).

Chapter 6 closes upon a interesting question. "Why is Luke silent about the *fact* of the great dangers and afflictions which Paul underwent in Ephesus?" (p 195) Luke probably saw here also a parallel Jesus-Paul, and so "thought of ending his Ephesian ministry on a triumphant note, as in the case of Jesus at the end of the Galilean ministry (Lk 9. 43). The rest would be the beginning of a journey narrative with Jerusalem as the goal" (p. 197). For Jesus, Jerusalem meant the way to suffering; for Paul, the way to "imprisonment and afflictions". In his speech at Miletus (Acts 20: 17-38) Paul exhorts the elders of Ephesus to take care of the flock, as pastors, aware of God's will and purpose. A parallel can be seen with Jesus' farewell at the Last Supper (Lk 22: 14-38). This suggests both a Jesus-Paul parallelism,

and a parallelism Jerusalem Apostles-Ephesian disciples.

While stressing the importance of Paul's decision to visit Rome (ch. 8) Luke also insists on Paul's awareness of God's purpose and will. In Rome failing to convince the Jews of Jesus' Messianic mission, according to the Scriptures, Paul denounces their hard-heartedness, quoting Is 6 9f This is Paul's final denunciation of the Jewish people The fact that the expression "the salvation of God" occurs only in Lk 3 6 and Acts 28.28 may suggest that for Luke the history of salvation moves between two poles, viz. salvation is first offered to the synagogue, but in view of the Jews' obstinacy it is offered to all peoples independently of the synagogue.

In the last chapter, a redaction critical summary view of the Ephesian ministry narrative as a whole, the author notes that Luke seems to sum up in the Ephesian ministry the experiences Paul made in all his apostolic journeys We note also that Luke's intention behind the narrative is to portray Paul following in the footsteps of Jesus' public ministry mainly in Galilee This appears more particularly in the narrative of Jesus' journey to Jerusalem where Luke three times reminds us that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem In the narrative of Paul's journey to Rome Luke three times refers to God's will regarding that journey Jesus bridged the gulf between the 'just' (Scribes, Pharisees) and the sinners (the people); Paul bridges the two sections of mankind (Jews, Gentiles).

Except for some minor revisions and the updating of the bibliography to 1981, the dissertation is published as it was presented in 1975. The work is a scholarly study which obviously requires that the reader has the Greek text at hand The transliteration of Greek and Hebrew texts does not prove a great inconvenience. The thesis is well worked out, step by step, every proposition or conclusion being corroborated by references to the main commentaries. Each chapter gives a survey of the text, its context, its structure, parallel passages in Acts or Luke. Propositions and conclusions are based upon minute analyses of details, which put forth interesting insights. Conclusions, for the most part, are qualified as 'probable', 'perhaps', etc. One regrets that in the space of a review it is not possible to give even a skeleton outline of the work. Only a few points could be mentioned here. As is unavoidable, the reader may occasionally put a question mark against some opinions advanced or conclusions, or some argument which may appear weak or forced This, however, does in no way detract from the value and the interest of the study.

The work reads easily, the style is almost conversational, the author's contact with the reader — almost of a lecturer with his audience — might explain a feature which is rather unusual in a dissertation, viz the frequent use of exclamation marks

The author hopes that this research by an Indian biblical scholar "will find willing acceptance also among scholars from the other parts of the world" (p. xvi) Perhaps one may express also the hope that the general reader may, one day, profit from this work, perhaps in an abridged or simplified form

J. Volckaert, S.J.

Jesus Son of Man. By Barnabas Lindars, SSF *London*, *SPCK*, 1983, Pp xii-244 £ 15.

The important studies concerning the Son of Man sayings in the NT have appeared during the last twenty years. G. Vermes in a lecture on "The Use of *barnash/bar nasha* in Jewish Aramaic" (1965) exposes the meaning of the expression and its actual use in the language spoken by Jesus He denies that the expression was ever used as a (messianic) title in Judaism, and so no Gospel passage referring to Dan 7: 13 can be traced back to Jesus. In 1979 M. Casey in his study *Son of Man. The Interpretation and Influence of Daniel 7* gives strong support to G. Vermes' position. Prof Lindars, however, finds that both works do little more than clear the ground for a re-examination of the meaning and use of the Son of Man sayings in the NT. *Jesus Son of Man* offers this re-examination, as expressed in the sub-title. "A Fresh Examination of the Son of Man Sayings in the Gospels in the Light of Recent Research."

It has been customary to classify the Son of Man sayings in three groups: "*present* sayings in which Jesus refers to himself as the Son of Man in connection with his present activity; *passion* sayings in which Jesus uses the same expression in speaking of his approaching death, and *future* sayings in which the expression is a messianic title in connection with his future glory" (p. vii). Lindars notes that "the idiomatic usage of the Aramaic *bar nasha* fits only the first and second of these groups, but not the third,

which therefore cannot be considered authentic" (p. viii)

The Aramaic idiom 'Son of Man' (ch 2) means 'a man', i e a human being However, the expression may also be used by a speaker to refer to himself (though not in an exclusive sense), meaning 'a man such as I' Using this meaning as criterion Lindars is led to retain only nine sayings which may be attributed to Jesus (chs 3-4) These are found in Q and Mark Mt 8 20 Lk 9 58; Mt 11 16-19 -Lk 7 31-35, Mt 12 32 -Lk 12 10, Lk 11 30, Mt 9 6 =Mk 2 10f -Lk 5 24, Mt 10 32f - Lk 12 8f, and three predictions of the passion in Mk 8 31, 9 31, 10 33f Even in some of these sayings, layers of later development will have to be removed Lindars notes that though only nine Son of Man sayings can reasonably be regarded as authentic, one cannot on that account just reject all the others Their presence in the tradition still has to be accounted for

In the authentic sayings the expression appears as a feature of Jesus' personal style, a self-reference on his part, not so much to his person, but rather to his mission The characteristic feature of the inauthentic sayings is that the phrase is used as an *exclusive* self-reference, introducing the Son of Man as an eschatological title with reference to Dan 7:13f. This development seems to be due to the early search for a Christology (totally absent from the original tradition) and must be the fruit of the evangelists' literary activity, each evangelist handling the material in accordance with his aims and outlook Lindars examines the peculiar aspects of this development in each one of the Gospels (chs 5-9) A brief examination is first made of the development of the Son of Man notion in Q Lindars notes that it has all too easily been assumed that Q presents a Son of Man Christology. Apart from the fact that any reconstruction of Q is too tenuous to allow conclusions from what the source apparently did not contain (the dangerous argument from silence), it should be clear that an idea of the Son of Man in Q as is generally assumed is confined to Lk 17: 22-27 and Mt 24:44.

"Mark's aim is clear and forthright It is to present Jesus as the Son of God Thus Mark has a conscious interest in the christological implications of his narrative" (p. 101). Matthew's originality is expressed in relation to contemporary developments in apocalyptic expection. Luke presents a more varied picture. For him the saying is a self-designation of Jesus, mainly in contexts of his ministry to the outcast and the tax-collectors, though also in apocalyptic contexts In John the Son of Man is "the agent of the revelation which is disclosed in the cross In this way the expression is almost a technical term It is not intended to refer specially to the humanity of Jesus, though the act of revelation is the climax of his human life But the Son of Man sayings in John never occur in discussions of the human-ness of Jesus" (p 155)

The final chapter, "The Son of Man and Christology", by way of a general conclusion examines 1 Daniel 7 and Christology, 2. the Christology of the Gospel writers, 3 The Christology of the Authentic Sayings Lindars examines the sayings in a context of conflict with the religious leaders, and the demands of discipleship in Jesus' teaching The development of the sayings enters Christian literature with the development of of Christology, more particularly in the Church's proclamation of the heavenly lordship of Jesus

The meaning of the Son of Man sayings remains one of the most debated points of Gospel criticism. Prof Lindars clearly exposes his purpose and method The book requires close attention but the simple style, the close and cogent argumentation are a great help The reader will appreciate also the judicious shades and nuances in the process of arguing and a clear awareness of the hypothetical character of critical 'reconstructions' and 'conclusions' Each chapter has an excellent introduction and concluding summary The bare outline of the book cannot do justice to the work Prof Lindars does not claim to have said the last word in the debate, but he believes that "the view advanced in this book (which is in many ways a common-sense view) provides the way forward for the future" (p ix)

J VOLCKAERT, SJ

Il Pre'testo Biblico. By Francesco CAPRIGLIONE. *Innsbruck, Lante Verlag* 1982. Pp 121 No price given.

"This work is openly desecrating" (p. 5). With these words the author introduces his work and describes its character and purpose. He proceeds from the principle that nothing is absolute; all so-called absolute values are relative. If economically and culturally he were able to do so, he would

willingly "desecrate the absolute character of the *Koran*, the *Tao*, the *Veda*, the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, *Mein Kampf*, *Das Kapital*, *The Wealth of Nations*, *The General Theory of Employment*" (p. 5). The present work is limited to the Christian Scriptures, more particularly to the Gospel of Mark.

In a first part (pp. 11-55) a brief sketch is given of the characteristics of Mk (style, symbolism, etc.) purpose, place and date of composition, language and various re-workings. The evaluation of Mk is quite absolute: Mk has no value whatsoever because of its vagueness, unlikely data, inaccuracies both in details and in substance. The whole of Mk is sheer invention devoid of any trace of scientific preoccupation.

Capriglione insists on the need of 'searching' for symbolism in Mk, a characteristic element of this Gospel. One example: in the 'invented' story of the multiplication of loaves the evangelist notes that after all had eaten, twelve (6: 43) and seven (8: 8) baskets of remainders were collected. A little attention is enough to detect that the first twelve baskets represent the twelve tribes of Israel; whereas the seven baskets must correspond to the "seven unbelieving peoples" mentioned in Deut 7: 1. The two multiplications symbolize the progress of Christianity in the Jewish and the Gentile world (p. 15).

Our author is keen also on detecting "hidden glosses", so called because they crept into the text either during the process of constructing Mk or very early before any copy of the original would have found its way to us. We must try, then, to detect such glosses. Mk 1: 9 serves as a good example. We read: "Jesus comes from Nazareth in Galilee to the Jordan." We are told that this cannot be the original version. Indeed, in the parallel passage Mt (who is supposed to depend on Mk) does not specify Nazareth (on p. 33 read Mt 3: 13 instead of 13: 13). We must note that according to Mk 1: 31 Jesus "returns from Judea to Capharnaum", a statement which is not quite accurate since Jesus on his return (v. 14) begins his Galilean ministry not in Capharnaum, but in an unspecified locality from where he proceeds to Capharnaum (v. 21). Mk mentions Capharnaum again in 2: 1 and 9. 33 "at the end of various missions" (p. 13), but it is difficult to find 'various missions' in Mk's text. Capriglione further notes that in Mk Capharnaum clearly is Jesus' home town. This should be evident, he says, for anyone who takes into account Mk's flair of symbolism since Capharnaum means "the place of the comforter". Early believers had noted that the Messiah, according to Scripture, would be the one who will comfort Israel (cp. Lk 2: 25). In other places Mk calls Jesus a Nazarene, a name which Luke takes for a name of origin: Jesus of Nazara, Capharnaum being Jesus' ordinary residence during the Ministry. Mt changed Nazara into Nazareth which most manuscripts of Lk soon accepted instead of Nazara. Finally an "ingenious scribe" has made Mk say that Jesus came "from Nazareth in Galilee" so as to make Mk agree with Mt and Lk (p. 34). Capriglione concludes this section on hidden glosses with the remark that the examples he gives suffice to show to what complicated and numerous manipulations the text has been subjected. It is our job to free it. One admires the ingenuity of the critic who discovers all these "ingenious manipulations of Mk."

The second part (pp. 59-102) is concerned with the evangelist's use of the 'pre/text' of Mk, and the use of Mk by Christian communities.

The pre/text of Mk must be sought in the Bible, i.e. the Hebrew OT, and in the Corpus Paulinum. Capriglione apologizes for not being able to justify his thesis through an analysis of all the biblical references he gives, as this work would be too voluminous and time consuming; he had to content himself with just a dry list of references. However, a specimen of this 'analysis' by way of "showing the process from pre/-text to Mk by way of *inventing* stories" is given for Mk 15: 23-37 from which the following lines are taken (p. 64). "Mk 15: 23 (they offered him wine mingled with myrrh) is completely constructed upon Prov 31: 6 (give strong drink to him who is perishing, and wine to those in bitter distress). Mk 15: 27f (and with him they crucified two robbers...), uses as pre/text in its imaginary construction the text of Is 53: 12 (he was numbered with the trangressors...)". This shows what the analysis consists of.

In the pre/text of Mk we can distinguish a primitive Mk (1-13), a Passion narrative (14-16), the narrative of the death of the Baptist (6: 17-29), the narrative of the appearances of the risen Jesus (16: 9-20).

The early Christian communities used biblical pre/texts and re-worked them for apologetico-catechetical and liturgical purposes, in this way "a life of Christ was built up" (p. 66) and "the

product called Gospel" through their manipulations, and further developed especially *in their interpretation of Mk — a process which is still going on in the Church's teaching and preaching*

Broadening the issue beyond Mk Capriglione extends his accusations against the homo religiosus (p 70), be he Christian, Hindu, Muslim, etc, all who seek 'security' by absolutizing religious or social principles, a party leader or a politician, a 'manifesto' or constitution, etc (p 71).

Capriglione is not unaware of a weak point in his position From the beginning he remarks that to assert that everything is relative is "auto-contradictory, parascientific and fideistic" (p 5) The book concludes with a chapter entitled "Per non concludere" which consists of twenty nine short paragraphs, rather sarcastic, regarding the use of the Bible in theology and preaching. The chapter winds up with the remark "To avoid absolutizing Such *truth* wants to be criticized, not to be adored" (p 110)

J VOLCKAERT, S.J

The Biblical Foundations for Mission. By Donald SENIOR and Carroll STUHMUELLER. *London, SCM Press,* 1983 Pp. xii-371 £ 9 50

A joint venture of two well known Passionist scholars, this book is rather breath-taking in its scope, as it is an effort to sift the whole Bible to establish the Biblical foundations for mission Its inspiration comes partly at least from the remark of Karl Rahner that "Vatican II is the first major official event in which the Church experienced itself as a *world* Church." Stuhmueller examines the OT in Part I, 132 pages, and Senior takes up the NT in Part II, 187 pages Part III, the concluding 34 pages, is a combined effort of both scholars to draw together the fruits of their research.

Such a vast canvas as the OT can only be approached thematically. Before doing this St establishes his methodology to show the transition from the secular to the sacred in Israel's history. On p. 13 he shows how secular events often liberate a people in time of crisis, these lead to secular celebration and this, in turn, to liturgical celebration that re-orchestrates the secular events and celebrations, thus stressing their religious dimension. With this in mind St. examines the history of salvation and election in the OT, as well as the impact of prophecy. These are finally considered in the light of Israel's prayer, especially as seen in certain representative psalms There is also a chapter entitled "The Biblical Process of Acculturation" It shows how God as Saviour works through the human, earthly details of Israel's existence. While admiring the skill with which the author has been able to telescope the events and meaning of the OT into this framework, and the unifying logic this framework gives to his interpretation, one could perhaps ask whether his presuppositions and even his selection and interpretation of biblical material are not tendentious

In the NT Senior adopts a different approach. Naturally his first consideration is the person and work of Jesus himself This is studied in a very profound chapter in which Jesus' notion of the Kingdom gives us the key to his understanding of mission. Individual gospels are considered later so that the special slant of each Gospel is stressed However, before that Se. appropriately has a chapter on "The Mission Theology of Paul" This again is very comprehensive Se. shows how the realisation that God was acting fully and finally in Jesus, crucified and risen, was at the heart of Paul's missionary dynamism, which, like that of Jesus, transcended all boundaries A chapter on Colossians and Ephesians, emphasizing the cosmic scope of the Church's mission, further explains the establishment of a missionary church and Paul as a model missionary The stress in the chapter on Mk is on the dynamic force of his narrative and its message of universal salvation. Mt's missionary discourse in ch 10 and his final commission in 28 16-20 synthesize his mission theology Lk's two volume work stressed Jesus' showing that salvation is for all, especially in Lk 24 and Acts where the impact of Christ's death and resurrection establishes, with the Spirit's action, a witnessing community zealous to take the good news to the ends of the earth. In some ways the chapter on Jo is the best of these chapters on individual gospels It stresses a unity in mission: the Father sending the Son, the Father and Son sending the Spirit, the Son sending the disciples The fact of the Word becoming flesh, seen in the light of 1:1; 1:18, and 3:16-17, shows the universal character of Jesus' mission. His other titles, especially the "I am" statements (the Light of the World; the Living Bread; the Good Shepherd; the Resurrection and the Life; the Way, the Truth and the Life), all reinforce the

universal dimension. The other books of the NT are neatly grouped under the title of "Witness and Mission". Here most stress is rightly given to 1 Pet, aptly called "The Witness of Hope". It shows the Church refusing to take a ghetto mentality in the hostile world of the Roman Empire. A similar theme is developed in the brief consideration of the book of Revelation.

Impressive and stimulating as the analysis of both the OT and NT is, perhaps Part III is the most challenging. Here the authors draw their conclusions. Mission is based on the conviction of the "sovereignty of God and his will to save" (321) and the concept of history as "sacred and revealing" (323) in this created world, the "arena of revelation and salvation" (326) With these there is a stress on religious experience as a "catalyst to mission" (329). The four modalities of mission (323) (direct proclamation; prophetic challenge in word and sign, witness on behalf of the Gospel; and mission as personal and social transformation) have great relevance for today. The book ends on a very interesting note listing a number of major issues that the Church needs to face more deeply (339) a universal God, a progressive eschatology; a dialectic between outreach and identity, the role of religious leadership, the value of religious experience, the Scriptures as a source of vision and strategy; pluralism as a value. The last question is entitled "The Unanswered Question", namely Israel and non-Christian religions.

Apart from minor errors in text citations (1 Cor 5.20 for 2 Cor 5:20 on pp 161 and 183, and 2 Cor 2:22 for 2 Cor 11·22 on p. 167), the book is admirably printed and in the best traditions of the SCM press. It is an important book. based on sound research, creative and positive, it makes a real contribution to missiology.

M. DULLARD, S.J.

The Stature of Waiting. By W. H. VANSTONE. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1982. Pp. x-115. £ 4.50.

This is a very insightful essay by an Anglican divine which covers and unifies fields of Scripture, theology, philosophy and psychology. It starts with an analysis of the significance of the frequent biblical expression that Jesus was "handed over" to men. The author sees in this a very ancient formula expressing the essence of the Passion, the turning point in the narrative about Jesus, whereby the active and dynamic rabbi, the "doer" in the early Gospel narrative (specially Mark and John), accepts out of love to become the "sufferer", i.e. the object of other peoples' activities. Thus the "handing over" is the transition from activity to passivity, from work to waiting, from freedom to bondage, from daylight to night, from subject to object, from doing to being-done-unto. There follows a perceptive explanation of the last week of Jesus' life. Palm Sunday represents a challenge of Jesus to the political leaders of his people to accept the ways of the Kingdom in the running of the national affairs, and in this challenge Jesus shows the strength of the popular support on which he counts. The challenge was a dangerous affair: it meant bringing the issue to a crisis point where it had either to be accepted (and reorientation of the national life would follow) or rejected, by killing the leader whose popular manifestations could make the Romans clamp down on the *status quo* that favoured the elites. At Gethsemane Jesus still *waits* to see if the challenge will be accepted or rejected, for he does not know the nature of Judas' deal with the authorities. The swords and spears show him that what he had known was a possible outcome was verified: Jesus is rejected and to be done away with. He had feared such result. The essence of the Passion is not so much the death by itself, but the fact that in his loyalty to the Kingdom Jesus takes the deadly risk of positing an ultimate challenge to the powerful leaders of his people Death is its consequence. The author then shows the significance of this revelation of God for our daily life. Jesus reveals a God whose glory is manifested not only in his action but in his becoming a "sufferer", i e. a dependent on the action of others. It is the nature of love to be *waiting*, to let oneself receive the impact of one's meaning for others Modern life leads to many situations of *waiting*. The waiting of the lover or of the artist are easily recognised as full of dignity. But the more banal waiting for transport, for information, for the many services which we require, seems to diminish us as human beings. The author shows that even this waiting can be as meaningful as our "achieving", for waiting means, no less than doing, that we grow into the image of the God who reveals himself in Jesus *not just as the Creator but as He who* accepts to enter into a situation of passivity, whose love means waiting for

reciprocity This is a book to be recommended for the many insights it offers, even if some of its etymological arguments may need sharpening and its theological explanation of the passion demand more reflection.

G GISPERT-SAUCH, S J.

Religions

Classical Hinduism by Mariasusai DHAVAMONY *Rome, Universita Gregoriana Editrice*, 1982, pp 526 $ 31

Over fifteen years of teaching experience, as well as contact with the world religions, prompted the author to bring out a handbook for students and others interested in the study of Hinduism. The appropriateness of the effort and the usefulness of such books is borne out by the ever growing interest in world religions

The book is evidently intended to be a text book for those interested in the basic "doctrines and spiritual disciplines of Hinduism", as stated by the author in the Preface Such a purpose has its advantages and disadvantages Through its thirteen chapters the book purports to introduce the reader to the various aspects of Hinduism. Revelation, the Idea of God, Incarnation, Priesthood, Prayer, Meditation, Mysticism, Morality, Salvation (these are some of the chapter titles). Each topic is briefly introduced, illustrated copiously with texts, and concluded with some general reflections Those interested in getting an acquaintance with Hinduism will find the book quite useful. The vast body of Hindu religious literature, covering severs millenia, is made accessible to them.

I do not know how the title *Classical Hinduism* is justified when even the Vedic, the Brahmanic and the Upanisadic phases of each topic are presented in the course of the treatment. One is puzzled by the inclusion of Bhagavadgītā among the *śruti* literature, since the *Gītā* is traditionally held to belong to the Smṛti literature, as part of the Mahābhārata. The topics are attractive and inviting but they are not treated in depth This may be because of the limited scope of the book as explicitly stated in the Preface. Sometimes certain sections tend to be an anthology of too many texts. *However* in the context of the fast-growing interest in Hinduism among students and scholars the book can be of great help. It will encourage further study and research in Hinduism.

T. K. JOHN, S.J.

Mass Conversions of Meenakshipuram: a Sociological Enquiry. By Mumtaz Ali KHAN. *Madras, The Christian Literature Society*, 1983. Pp. xii-169. Rs. 20.00

The mass conversions to Islam in Tamil Nadu, beginning in Meenakshipuram in 1980, soon followed by comparatively smaller "conversion waves", provoked immediate reactions not only in the region but all over India. A mass of reports and analyses appeared in the press and in most weekly and monthly periodicals. These, in turn, have had a long term effect on the thinking and action of various political and religious groups and institutions. Since some of the converted families belonged to the Christian community, Church leaders of various denominations, too, have begun to take an interest in these events and the debate about them. It is significant in this context that the present study has been published by the Christian Literature Society of Madras

The author teaches at the University Agricultural Science, Bangalore as Assistant Professor of Rural Sociology, and has been engaged in active research and writing concentrating on the weaker sections of society, especially the rural poor of South India. In this study he sets out (1) to ascertain the factors in the mass conversions of the kind witnessed recently in Tamil Nadu, (2) to find out the modalities in mass conversions and (3) to assess the public reactions to their consequences. Since he was intent upon starting his researches immediately, whilst the events were still fresh in the memory of people, he worked without financial assistance from any funding agency. Consequently he had to restrict his work of interviewing and sampling to a few selected areas The data were collected in three areas, all located in Tirunelveli district: Meenakshipuram, Tankasi, the Taluqa Headquarters, and Tirunelveli, the District Headquarters Besides, the author selected some areas in Karnataka in order to assess the opinion of people living far away from the actual scene.

The first, introductory, chapter draws a picture of the method adopted, the difficulties encountered in this kind of research, and the ensuing limitations of the study as a whole. Chapter II depicts the socio-economic background of the areas where mass conversions had taken place. It also examines the Hindu-Muslim relationship, the caste-structure, the social disabilities of the Harijans, the non-Brahmin movement, the history

of conversions in the area since the beginning of British rule and the socio-economic characteristics of the converts. Chapter III then discusses the actual conversions, their immediate consequences and the role of the Hindu and Muslim organizations involved. The respondents' perception of the conversions (ch. IV) form an integral part of the event as a whole and some case studies (ch V) furnish information on some vital issues pertaining to conversions, and the kind of information difficult to obtain through interview schedules and questionnaires.

The main conclusions of the study are that the Meenakshipuram mass conversions have to be placed into the context of a long chain of such conversions that started, in the author's view, from the seventeenth century onwards, mostly in the area of the three southernmost districts of the present Tamilnadu state. It is in these three districts that the Pallars constitute a vast majority and it is in these districts that the non- Brahmin dominant groups like the Thevars or Marbars have had an extremely strained relationship with the Pallars. The Pallars who were totally dependent on the Thevars and others for their survival were totally submissive to the Thevars earlier and therefore all forms of exploitation were practised by the Thevars and tolerated by the Pallars. But with the spread of education and the creation of an awareness of their rights and privileges, the Scheduled Caste youths have started a 'movement for self-respect' . The traditional values and norms had allowed the old generation to recognize the superiority of the others and to consider themselves a part of the process of 'Karma'. But the younger generation is attempting to substitute this with a set of new values, norms and aspirations, all aiming at 'social equality' And thus, a social revolution is heralded in Tamilnadu (pp. 156f).

The theory of Gulf money being the major incentive is virtually ruled out by all the respondents in Tamilnadu, whereas the respondents in Karnataka are divided about it. While the respondents in Tamilnadu do not entertain the apprehension of communal disharmony, in Karnataka the situation is just the reverse. A legal ban on conversions has the support of the Brahmins and the Thevars in Tamilnadu and of the Brahmins as well as the non-Brahmin upper castes in Karnataka.

The Government of Tamilnadu is seen generally to have failed to promote the interests of Harijans, and indirectly to have lent support to the harassment of the Harijans and their exploitation. Through its measures for preventing conversions and promoting reconversions, it has lost the image of a secular government.

Deplorable flaws in the style and presentation and a somewhat careless proof reading cannot detract from the great value of this largely convincing study. One is left wondering, however, about the view that the present mass conversions simply stand in line with earlier ones, including those to Christianity from the seventeenth century onwards Was there already then a "younger generation" trying to "substitute" the "traditional values of the older generation with a set of new values", as the long quotation above suggests? The argument somehow does not seem to hold

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Church History

The St Thomas Christians Revolution in 1653. By Rev. Jacob KOLLAPARAMBIL, *Kottayam, The Catholic Bishop's House*, 1981 Pp. x-292. Price. Rs. 20.

The 3rd of January 1653 is one of the most important dates for the history of Christianity in India. It is also one of its saddest. For on that fateful day the greater majority of the Thomas Christians took an oath through their representatives never to obey any more the Paulist missionaries and their archbishop. This meant the Jesuits working among those Oriental Christians and the archbishop of Cranganore, who was a Jesuit since the end of the 16th century

Fr Kollaparambil was well prepared to go over again all what preceded, accompanied and followed that day He is the author of an excellent book entitled *The Archdeacon of All-India* (1972, reviewed in *The Clergy Monthly*, 1973, pp. 334-5). Actually one could venture to say that the present volume, though much more restricted as far as the number of years is concerned, shows in so many ways how the office of the archdeacon worked out under increasing difficulties during the first half of the 17th century.

The book is neatly divided into two parts: The Coming of the Revolution, and The Revolution of 1653. I confess that I like the use of 'Revolution' for several reasons. The most compelling

one is that it was an unique case, almost unknown in the relations between East and West, of a whole Oriental community revolting against their Latin masters. I am sorry to say people today still feel afraid of learning the lessons of the past in dealing with similar ecumenical problems of our times Yes, it was a revolution, and today there are still more than one million and half Christians whose separate existence, whether we like it or not, is due to that 'revolution', an event which could have been easily averted if the missionaries of those days had listened to a few prophetic voices

Fr Jacob is generally blunt and does not hesitate to speak plainly Some of the readers of his book find him too critical of the Jesuit attitude Though he does not do that, a comparison with the Jesuit approach to the Middle East Oriental Christians at the same time would show that it was completely different from the one taken then in Kerala Here the idea of missionary monopoly, Padroado exclusiveness, was at work, with a conscious or unconscious contempt for Eastern Christian realities What a fuss was repeatedly made about the use of leavened bread! Were the Jesuits of those days so badly informed ? Their attitude increased tensions between the Thomas Christians and their unsolicited masters. As well shown by the author, centuries of autonomy of which the archdiaconate was the living symbol and upholder could not be easily erased by a few decades of latinisation

About the 'consecration' of Mar Thomas I as a bishop, by twelve priests, on Ascension Day 22 May 1653, I would be more critical than the author about the so-called letters of Mar Atallah Did he really claim to be a patriarch, even if he had failed to be elected such? Fr Jacob studies the evidence carefully, especially in the chapter entitled *Who was Mar Atallah?*, particularly page 213, but I am not convinced that he would have set himself up even as *muphrian*, the quasi-patriarch of the Syrians in Irak-Iran, and therefore naturally assumed the title of patriarch Are we so sure of the authenticity of his letters to the Thomas Christians?

Fr Joseph Tekkadath SDB published in 1972 his Rome doctoral thesis under the title *The Troubled Days of Francis Garcia S J, Archbishop of Cranganore (1641-1659)*. It actually deals with the same basic topic as the new book of Fr Kollaparambil. The differences between the two are as follows: Tekkadath's approach is somewhat more focussed on the last years before the 'revolution', and the range of the sources he used is directly related with his topic. Fr Jacob's treatment is wider, his sources come from more archives of various types, his approach is, so I think, more from the viewpoint of the Thomas Christian people themselves. At any rate, if one desires to make one's own opinion about this capital event both books will be needed

Fr Jacob's dissertation provides us with a large number of texts, quotations and extracts from contemporary sources In this respect he has made an "invaluable contribution to our knowledge and increased the possibility of coming to know" more concretely what really happened

E. R. HAMBYE, S J

The Catholic Church in Sri Lanka. The Dutch Period. Volume II: 1712-1746 By V PERNIOLA, S J. *Dehiwala, Tisara Prakasakayo*, 1983. Pp xxxii-526 Sl Rs 550 (Available from Asian Trading Corporation, Bangalore).

In the VIDYAJYOTI issue of February I published a review of the first volume of Fr V Perniola's work The second volume followed closely on the heels of the first

The 125 documents he publishes in English translation, almost all of them for the first time, throw much light on and give much detail information about Catholic life in the 18th century Sri Lanka, the work of the Oratorian missionaries, who were the followers of Fr Vaz and his worthy successors, and the relentless persecutions of the Dutch officialdom They were relentless, because as shown by the original documents the official policy both of Colombo and of Batavia did not change. It became still more adverse to anything redolent of "Papistry" all the more so because thanks to the Oratorians and dozens of devoted catechists, Catholicism was not only maintained but registered progress.

One of the great personalities that shone out was Fr Jacome Gonsalves He not only was an excellent and ubiquitous missionary, but mastered both Sinhala and Tamil and published works in both these languages, besides being also conversant with Dutch. His twenty Sinhala, fourteen Tamil and seven Portuguese works are listed on pp. 352-356 Actually this is an appendix to a short life of Fr Jacome, and there are six other such biographies of Oratorian missionaries of Sri Lanka.

Neither the relations with Goa and Lisbon, nor those with the Kandy kings are overlooked. As regards the latter the relations between the Oratorians and those kings were rather happy, except for a short spell of persecution. As could be expected, the persecution was instigated by the Dutch.

There is little doubt that Goan Catholicism provided a very fine number of outstanding men, though mostly from Salsette and Chorão Not all of them were saints like Joseph Vaz, nor accomplished linguists like Fr Jacome. But really all of them were self-sacrificed, ceaselessly zealous, totally devoted to the flock, almost always living in poverty, if not in destitution, yet surviving and forging ahead.

It is fairly often mentioned that the Oratorians enjoyed intimate relations with the Jesuits, who wherever they could be found, did everything to assist the Oratorians coming down from Goa on their difficult way to Sri Lanka

This volume II deserves the same praises I gave to vol I It has also a well printed reproduction of an 18th-century Dutch map of Sri Lanka and South-East India.

E R HAMBYE, S.J

Barriers to Ecumenism. The Holy See and the World Council of Churches on Social Questions. By Thomas Sieger DERR. New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books, 1983. Pp x-102. $ 7 95

The word ecumenism should not, as some too broad-minded people want it, be extended to the so-called inter-religious dialogue. Words have their own meaning given by the accepted conventions. Ecumenism means the movement towards unity among Christians. The Catholic Church joined it more fully, often forcefully, since Vatican II. Much progress has been made from all sides An amount of collaboration with the World Council of Churches has taken place. Yet obstacles remain, and they are not always easy to single out, nor to overcome

Derr has taken great pains to describe in some detail the divergences that still exist between the Holy See, or Vatican, and the W.C.C. For instance *Sodepax* had become one of the most visible and better known ecumenical platforms in this respect. Yet, it died a rather quiet death. As the book shows unmistakably, there are differences between the two bodies on the ways and means to approach and eventually combat social ills. There is question of principles involved in many issues. Can the popes foster violence as a means of promoting social justice? From their many declarations it is clear that they do not want to do so.

I have the impression that sometimes the author is rather negatively critical of what the Holy See of Rome upholds and maintains. I do not like labels: nobody does Is the W.C C. more progressive? It all depends on the criterion of progressiveness one assumes — At any rate the book is informative and challenging. This is the principal aim of its writer.

E. R HAMBYE, S J.

Dr Russell of Maynooth. By Ambrose MACAULAY *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1983 Pp xii-338 £ 21 00.

Charles William Russel is still remembered, at least among a number of specialists, principally for the part he played in the conversion of John Henry Newman to the Catholic Church "He had, perhaps, more to do with my conversion than anyone else. He called upon me, in passing through Oxford in the summer of 1841, and I think I took him over some of the buildings of the University. He called again another summer, on his way from Dublin to London I do not recollect that he said a word on the subject of religion on either occasion He sent me at different times several letters, he was always gentle, mild, unobstructive, uncontroversial" (p 95 from Newman, *Apologia pro Vita Sua*, 1946 ed., pp 190f).

Russell also played a highly significant role both in Irish and English affairs of the Catholic Church For forty years his life was centred on the Maynooth seminary, first as a professor, particularly of Church History, and then as its president from October 1857 until his death on the 26th February 1880.

All those years were crucial in the Irish ecclesiastical and political scene. Russell, though not animated by any political aspiration, did, indirectly at least, play some part in the gradual development of Irish consciousness. He knew personally most of the leaders of his time. As president of Maynooth his influence both on the seminary and on the Irish Church was obviously considerable.

After having finished his seminary studies and some more years of postgraduate reading, he was ordained on

June 7, 1935 at the age of twenty-three. During a term at the seminary as professor of humanities he stayed in Rome for the summer of 1841. From that time onwards his mind became increasingly bent on scholarship and research, particularly on Church History, e.g. Pius VII, Leibniz' scheme for Christian unity, etc. Thanks to the contacts he had in Rome, he was appointed vicar apostolic for Ceylon (Sri Lanka). By persevering efforts and after a private audience with Pius IX, he succeeded in having the nomination cancelled.

Russell went back to Maynooth He became professor of ecclesiastical history until he was elected president. During those fruitful decades, he was one of the frequent writers in the *Dublin Review*, founded in 1836. He also wrote several articles for the *Edinburgh Review* and the *North British Review*. Numerous entries on the Catholic Church and Ireland in *Chamber's Encyclopaedia* flowed from his pen During that time also he was thought on at least two occasions to be a suitable candidate to one of the Irish sees, including the archbishopric of Dublin Again, he escaped from such a prospect, because he never thought to have the qualities that he deemed to be necessary for a bishop.

The author devotes a full chapter, the third, to "Russell and Newman's Conversion", and another one, the fifth, to "Wiseman and the *Dublin Review*". They both give us much fresh insight not only on the relations between Irish and English Catholics at the time, but also on the rise of intellectual awareness among the Catholic leading figures in England.

This is a solid work, built on much research among various archives including private and public records It can be taken as a model of an 'intellectual' biography Perhaps more could have been said about the spiritual quest, ideas and practices of that Irish priest, who during his life-time enjoyed such an influence, even on such unexpected person as Gladstone

E. R HAMBYE, S.J.

Henry Venn — Missionary Statesman. By Wilbert R. SHENK. *New York, Maryknoll, Orbis Books* (American Society of Missiology Series. No. 6), 1983. Pp. XVI-175. $ 9.95.

This book by a Mennonite writing on an Evangelical Anglican, is a good example of an ecumenical outlook. As Vice-President of the Overseas Ministries of his own church, Shenk must have been deeply attracted by the personality of Venn, who was born in England in 1796, never travelled abroad, and died in 1873 The biography is not merely concerned with giving the facts, the evolution of the man, his long tenure of office as Honorary Clerical Secretary of the Church Missionary Society Even taking into account the enthusiasm of the author for his hero, there is little doubt that Venn was one of the great inspirers of missionary endeavours in the Church of England. Indeed he was an Evangelical and showed no interest for and no patience with the Oxford Movement and its increasing High Church trends Venn was the son of one of the founders of the C.M.S He was a member of it already by 1819. From 1846 he was its secretary and henceforth his life was identified with it.

Not only was Venn a pioneer in the way he directed much of the destiny of the C M S. Above all he developed a very personal approach to the missions Today he could be called anti-colonialist, though this would not have been so clear 130 years ago. He was all in favour of the indigenous Church and even of an incipient inculturation It was under him that St John's College at Agra was founded in 1850. Yet Venn was a man of his times, and favoured a "Christian policy" from the part of the British government in India Perhaps the best and more lasting contribution of Henry Venn was his reflexions on Mission Church relation. He favoured a quick take-over by the local clergy Granted that his views sound quite clerical, it was all the same the first time that an evangelical Englishman expressed such for the time, advanced views. A complete bibliography of Venn's own works as well as of those written about him is given

The author could have perhaps investigated in a deeper manner the causes that led to the partial failure of Venn's ideas Perhaps it would have been too much to analyse the missionary literature of the period and to find out which type of missiology inspired it. Shenk does it a little, but rather timidly. A small misleading error props up on page 82 One reads: "In 1851 Venn authorized the re-organization of the Cottayam Institution in Ceylon". It is not in Ceylon but in India, and specifically in Kerala. It is the famed high school and later college also of the C.M.S. at Kottayam.

E. R. HAMBYE, S.J.

See also p. 408.

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII **OCTOBER 1984**

In This Issue

Theological reflection, the purpose of this Journal, bears primarily on the ongoing events of our history in the light of the Gospel, specially on those events which seem to indicate an eruption of a new spirit, a new outlook and a new way of acting within the human and the Christian community. For this reason it was thought that VIDYAJYOTI could not let the struggle of the fisherfolk in Kerala this last summer pass unnoticed It is an event that has raised the expectations, hopes and fears of many people not only in Kerala but also in the rest of India, and on which much comment has already appeared in print. The event may well mark an important turning point in the life of the Church in Kerala. Ours would want to be a contribution, from a certain distance in time and space, to a serene and prayerful reflection on what happened. There is no question of making a thorough assessment, for which the time is not yet ripe, but of participating in an important dialogue and keeping it moving.

Three articles offer some theological background for a community reflection. Fr R. J RAJA writes on the Prophets of the Third World, basing himself on the Biblical understanding of the prophetic role. Fr F. PODIMATTAM, well known to our readers, faces the question of the morality of the so-called fast unto death, which might rather be called "wholehearted struggle for justice through fasting". Fr T. K. JOHN also reflects on the meaning and value of fasting in the struggle for justice, as seen through the life and the teachings of Mahatma Gandhi. The issue includes a small dossier containing an account of the basic facts and events, by M. K. GEORGE, the letter of the bishops of Kerala, and a theological reflection on what happened, from a pastoral perspective, by Fr A. PUTHUMANA.

May these pages be a help for the spiritual reflection of all people concerned and indeed of the whole Christian community in India, in view of a further commitment [illegible] inspired by an enlightened faith.

Prophets for the Third World

(An Interpretation for our times of Num 11: 29)

R. J. Raja, S.J.*

INDISCRIMINATELY used, as in current literature and discussions, the terms "prophet", "prophecy", "prophetism" "prophetic phenomenon", etc bristle with complex difficulties They may refer to the *charismatic* prophets of the early times, the *confrontation* prophets of the types of Amos, Jeremiah, Hosea etc, the *restoration* prophets of the post-exilic times, the *ecclesial* prophets of the early Christian community, or, in a broad application of the terms and in a non-technical sense, the *Christian followers* in general or even the men and women in a *secular* society who work for and bring about a radical alteration among peoples and communities, situations and relationships, tenets and beliefs (e.g. people like Buddha, Nehru etc.).

Who is a Prophet ?

In this paper the term "*prophet*" includes all these different categories and excludes none It is not confined to the narrow limits of the technical meaning especially as used in the OT, but applies to everyone from any walk of life, who explicitly or implicitly inspires and edifies, confronts and challenges, questions and guides people in their mutual interrelatedness to one another in society, and to God and history.

If "to possess the Spirit of God was to be a prophet"[1], and for Luke, "'*Propheteuein*' is quite central as the work of the Spirit"[2], then since "the Spirit blows wherever it pleases" (Jo 3: 8), overcoming the divisiveness of Babel[3], and since "the seeds of the Word lie hidden"[4] in all national and religious traditions, the prophet with whom we are

---

*Fr R J Raja is Professor of Scripture at St Paul's Seminary, Tiruchirapalli.
1. Jeremias J, *New Testament Theology I*, London 1971, *p.* 78.
2. Schweizer E., "Pneuma", in *TDNT* VI, 408.
3. Vat. II, AG 4.
4. Ibid. 11.

concerned is one who transcends every particularity of caste and creed, race and culture, religion and belief, is nowhere a foreigner, at home everywhere, hostile to none, brother to everyone.

Our interest in the prophets of Israel should not make us deny that many non-Israelite prophets derive their value from genuine religious experiences. If early Christians felt no qualms of conscience in recognizing real prophecies among the Sibylline Oracles, and prophecy as a charism says nothing about the orthodoxy of the prophet, there is no reason to restrict the prophetic Spirit of God exclusively to the "normative" channels of "Salvation History" (cf. the oracles of Balaam in Num 22-24).

The larger community of non-Christians touched by and orientated to God also share to some extent in this charism, just as the baptized Christians do.[5] They have an authentic ministry to the degree that their inspiration has a societal and communitarian context, that they represent the needs of God's people, and that they express a continual concern for people and society.

These prophets, wherever they are found, are a challenge and a threat. The "overzealous" among us may feel the Elohist within us and cry out in jealousy, "Moses, my Lord, stop them" (Num 11: 28). But then these Eldads and Medads, freely called by God, will also be staunchly defended by him in the words. "Are you jealous on my account ? If only the whole people of Yahweh were prophets, and Yahweh gave his Spirit to them all !" (Num 11. 29).

Third World versus or with the First and the Second ?

The term "Third World", a convenient phrase to denote the developing nations, the countries geographically located in the southern hemisphere of the world and characterized by inhuman poverty and simple religiosity, seems the "locus" most apt for any kind of prophetism to thrive Emerging from the shackles of oppression and superstition, the need for prophets is all the greater in their milieu than in countries traditionally called "Christian" which have reached the point of satiety, indifferentism, lethargy and dormancy.

The specification of the title, "prophets for the Third World" far from being chauvinistic or narrowminded, intends to express the

5 Note that the LXX does not *translate* the Hebrew word '*nabi*', which it renders *consistently as 'prophētēs'*; rather it uses an equivalent term with a venerable Greek history behind it, that could mean something for the non-Jewish world of the time. Though the Jewish translators would have been the first to avow that Israelite prophecy was something special, yet they acknowledged, and so must we, that it stood in some kind of relationship to the greater human history and culture, of which Israel was only a part.

dire need for and the wider opportunities given to prophets in that part of the world where two-thirds of humanity is trying to rise above both material and spiritual need.

The prospects and the problems of the Third World may also be those of the First and the Second, in differing degrees. But then it is the Third World that makes or mars both capitalism and communism — the ideologies of the northern hemisphere. To the extent the Third World countries rise or fall, to that extent also will the developed countries prosper or perish, as is testified to by history.

Hence, prophets for the Third World need not necessarily be prophets from the Third World. Since the destiny of the Third World, as well as of the First and the Second, are bound together for good or for bad, we may and shall expect prophets for the Third World arising also from the First and the Second, people who would be able to challenge the individualistic, selfish and profit-oriented hedonism of the West; the collective, materialistic and atheistic communism of the Soviets and of China; and at the same time the oppressive structures of caste, creed and colour, myth, superstition and fatalism, etc, of the Third World.

When that happens, it will be easier to realize the harmonious community of nations foretold by Isaiah, who in fact must have possessed an extraordinary cultural transcendence to pronounce this astonishing statement on the theme of international harmony: "In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria and the Assyrian will come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will worship with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be the third with Egypt and Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth, whom the Lord of hosts has blessed, saying, 'Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel my heritage' " (Is 19: 23-25) Isaiah has proved himself a prophet not only of "transculture" but of "counterculture"!

The Prophetic Phenomenon — a Ministry of Experience

It is evident from the Bible itself that prophetism in the Church is a universal phenomenon irrespective of age, sex, status, position, colour and caste. The figure of Moses (Ex 3) as a prophet (Dt 18: 15.18; Acts 7: 37) serves as a supple and multifaceted model for the prophetic ministry of the people of God at any time and place. But exactly how and by whom are these facets to be realized, whether by men or women, lay or clerical, amateurs or professionals has to be determined in the context of the changing needs and circumstances.

As the acclaimed Moses is one who had first "disclaimed" privileges, so is the case with the prophet for our times. Only one who is ready to stand stripped before the Almighty God, one who is willing to put off the old man (Eph 4: 17-24; Col 3: 9-10), one who like Moses, is able to take off his shoes (Ex 3: 5) before the Burning Bush, can play a meaningful role in the great deliverance that God is going to bring about through his instrumentality.

The prophetic commission "I send you" (Ex 3: 10; Is 6: 8; Jer 1: 7) which is purely the initiative of God, is always preceded by the stripping naked of the prophet (Ex 3: 5; Is 6: 7; Jer 1: 4-5). One must be ready to lose all one's securities and protections, give up all one's plans and ways of action in order to be possessed by the incomprehensible power of the Almighty. The falling on one's knees in humility before the transcendent God, a symbol of total emptiness before the Omnipotence, is the starting point of any prophetic vocation in the Church. Then, and only then, shall the Burning Bush illumine, transform and guide the prophet "to tear up and to knock down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant" (Jer 1: 10).

This total surrender and transparency to God, this docility to allow oneself to be moulded by him (Rom 9: 21; Is 29: 16; 45: 9; 64. 7) divinizes the prophet and makes him a quasi-God (2 Pet 1: 4). When he has "passed over" himself, then God "passes over" himself to him. The almost abstract "I am who am" (Ex 3: 14) becomes the vibrant and vitalizing, forceful and dynamic "I am with you always" (Mt 28: 20). The "passed over" prophet can now make the people "pass over" from the fleshpots of Egypt to the land flowing with milk and honey (cf. 1 Cor 10: 2).

This process of the "passing over" of the prophet opens him to new vistas of God's intimate presence. This *desert experience* in him turns him on to a *God-experience*, living, tender and loving as that of a spouse to the spouse (Hos 2: 14) and a parent to the child (Hos 11: 1-4)[6], and he surrenders himself to the "still small voice" (1 Kgs 19: 12), *the creative and liberating presence* of God. The prophet has emerged !

We are not wrong in asserting that the double experience described above (that of the desert and that of God) is not exclusive to the Biblical prophets, but, allowing for a cultural transcendence in the call and commission of individual prophets, it is universal in every

6. Although students of Hosea like to see in ch. 11 the image of God as Father, yet the language of tender love which characterizes God here is an attribute that our modern culture would associate with mothers (cf. *Is 42:14; 46: 3-4; 49:15-16; 66:13*). It is interesting to note that the Hebrew term used to express God's love for the people is *rahamim* which is the plural of maternal womb.

encounter of God (and the prophet) with the people; it is an essential part of the prophetic dimension in the ministry of the Church in *every age.*

In the Indian tradition, too, total possession of God or God-realization (*moksha*) implies an all-round renunciation and detachment (*sādhanā*). It is only in the process of one's own liberation from oneself and things that one ushers in the just society (*dharma*), and thus experiences God (*anubhava*). Contemplative experiential knowledge of God (*vidya*) is the result of overcoming one's egoism (*ahamkāra*), illusions (*māyā*) and wrong knowledge (*avidyā*).

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry in sharing

The "man come of age" (Bonhoeffer) is rebelling against paternalism in every form — in the family, in society, in the Church. Unfortunately the terms 'clerical' and 'lay', as used in the Church, have come to place the latter in a secondary and derivative role, which they rightly resent.

On the contrary, the laity are in their own way "sharers in the priestly, prophetic and kingly functions of Christ"[7] and "it is the duty of the pastors so to shepherd the faithful and recognize their services and charismatic gifts that all according to their proper roles may cooperate in the common undertaking" of the mission in the Church.

The best example from the Biblical times is Amos. While Amaziah, a member of the political and ecclesiastical establishment, less objective and less free, rises in opposition against the discerning prophecy of Amos at Bethel, the latter avows that it is God who has sent him "to prophesy to (my) people Israel" (Am 7 10-15).

Amos' own account of his call depicts him not as a religious professional, or one trained in prophesying, but as an amateur, a layman (7: 14) who suddenly found himself prophesying spontaneously because of a powerful sense of religious and social obligation He was indeed a threat to the *status quo* (a layman in opposition to the cleric). Who does not see here an intimation of the prophetic vs the ordained ministries in the Church today ? If both are indispensable for the vitality and authenticity of the Church's ministry, then they should be allowed to function irrespective of who performs them.

In the early Church, too, the gift of prophecy was renewed by the Holy Spirit (cf. Joel 3: 1ff; Acts 2: 4, 17ff; 19: 6) to such an extent

7. LG 31; Cannons 204, 208 (new Code).

that a prophetic charism existed (1 Cor 14: 1-5; 1 Thes 5: 20), and was exercised in fact by all kinds of men and women (Acts 11: 27f; 13 1f; 21: 9f; Rev 10: 11; 18: 20), to exhort, to console, to build up (1 Cor 14: 3; Rev 10: 7), to reveal hidden secrets (1 Cor 13: 2; Rev 1 3; 22: 7), as part of the Church's foundational charism (Eph 2: 20; 4. 11) and as clearly distinguished from pseudoprophets (Acts 13: 6; 1 Jo 4: 1; 1 Tim 4: 1).

This brings us to the concept of *sharing in the prophetic* ministry and the need to encourage the prophetic phenomenon wherever it is found — be it among the clergy, the religious, or lay people, women, youth, etc.

Though it may not be called a "prophetic manifesto", *Gaudium et Spes* of Vatican II surely contains a number of "prophetic" utterances that give a proper perspective to the prophetic ministry in various sectors inside (and even outside) the Church.

a) Since the Church is an "unspent fountain of those virtues which the modern world most needs" (GS 43), it is the duty of *pastors* by their conduct and concern to reveal the face of the Church to the world The *prophetic pastor* (bishop or priest) is one who by his preaching and living is able to imbue all the earthly activities of the faithful with true Gospel values. He is one who, having been challenged by the word of God, "living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword" (Heb 4: 12), is able to challenge his congregation to a committed and unwavering love for the Lord and his people; he is one who recognizes and promotes the dignity as well as the responsibility and freedom of the laity in the Church, he is one ready to receive advice and suggestions from them and at the same time encourage and sustain their efforts (cf. LG 37, 1 Thes 5: 19; 1 Jo 4: 1); he is one who by his ardent concern for the civic, economic and social welfare of the human family makes a concerted effort with like-minded forces in the world to bring about the unity of the family of God. "*Homo sum; humani nihil a me alienum puto*" (Terence) should be his watchword. He is a man who is able to dialogue and work with men and women of all shades of opinions and tenets to bring about the harmony and the welfare of humanity; he is one who is able to read the 'signs of the times' and find evangelical responses to them; he is one who is able to accept that he has not the right answer to every human problem in the world and hence willing to change his opinions.

In fact, *prophetic priesthood* is not a privileged caste or an ingrown professional cadre, but "discipleship of the Lord" and "brotherhood

8. LG 30; Canon 212.

among brothers". The prophetic charism of the priest puts him at the service of God and that of his people[9], implying a true involvement as opposed to indifference or non-commitment.

b) The gradual emergence of *the lay people* in the Church is one of the most important advances registered by Vatican II. If the Church exists both *ad intra* and *ad extra*, the faithful too are responsible for the Church as well as for the world. As citizens of two worlds, they must live up to the Gospel values, conscientiously discharging their duties towards both the Church and the world.

In their duties to the Church they fulfil their prophetic role not just by submission and docility, but by a constructively critical attitude towards the Church and by active participation in all that concerns her (Can. 212) They are not mere dumb sheep in the fold (Jo 10: 1-18), but free sons in the Son (Gal 4. 6-7). They are responsible to the Church just as priests and bishops are, in their own degree. In the Church of Jesus Christ there is absolutely no place for ecclesiastical colonialism. It is a sorry state of affairs in the Third World that the economic colonialism perpetrated unjustly by the capitalist empire is made to continue in the Third World Churches in the form of an ecclesiastical colonialism.

The Council, however, affirms that the laity should have a "lawful freedom of enquiry and of thought, and the freedom to express their minds humbly and courageously about those matters in which they enjoy competence" (GS 62). They should be "permitted and sometimes even obliged to express their opinion on things which concern the Church" (LG 37) These are indeed prophetic calls from the Council which should find an equally prophetic response from the faithful, as well as from the hierarchy.

In matters which concern the prophetic ministry of the Church, "performing eminently valuable work on behalf of bringing the Gospel to the world" (LG 35; AG 41: AA 10; Can. 211), collaborating with pastors in the various projects for the welfare of parochial communities (CD 30; LG 37), undertaking tasks on their own initiative (LG 37), actively participating in the liturgical life of the community (AA 4.10), making evangelical values pervade and permeate all the spheres of family and married life (LG 35; AA 4), the laity eminently fulfil their proper roles in building up the Church (AA 25; GS 43) and realize in themselves the work of "Christ the great prophet, who proclaimed the Kingdom. . . .by the testimony of his life and the power of his words" (LG 35).

9. PO of Vatican II uses the term "service" at least 10 times with reference to the priestly ministry.

But the work of the laity does not stop there. Their prophetic role extends to their own domain which is the secular city. Since they belong at the same time both to the people of God and to the civil society (AG 21), their main duty is *the witness* which they are bound to bear to Christ by their life and works in their social milieu, civil and political life, professional groups, in short, in all things *in the midst of human society* (cf. AG 21: AA 16; GS 43, etc.).

Definitely the proper mission of Christ was neither of a political nor economic nor social order But the religious mission that he entrusted to his Church turns into "a function, a light and an energy which can serve to structure and consolidate the human community according to the divine law" (GS 42) Hence the laity (as well as the Church) are sadly mistaken if they think they can shirk this responsibility to the world. "The Christian who neglects his temporal duties neglects his duties towards his neighbours and even God, and jeopardizes his eternal salvation" (GS 42).

It is incumbent therefore on the laity that they wholeheartedly involve themselves in the building up of the human city. Their proper role is there, right in the milieu where they live — be it political, economic, civil or social It is there they are prophets at home.

c) The so-called generation gap or age barrier has kept off *youth and children* from a meaningful participation in the Church, in her life and apostolate They feel themselves strangers at their own Father's house because of a traditional, frozen, doubtful and grudging attitude of the Church towards them "Young and imperfect" is what we still hear in clerical circles !

But, *youth* is a force to reckon with in the Church They have become more and more conscious of their own personality and worth, dynamism and force, creativity and initiative, and it is time that the Church recognizes the enormous potential she has in her youth, which if rightly channelized, can bring a new vitality to the Church.

The youth of today are growing impatient and rightly question the laws and regulations in the Church and in society that are out of tune with modern times, and the ways of thinking and feeling that are fossilized or antiquated. It is not surprising that having taken a closer look at the world into which they did not ask to be born, they simply do not like what they see ! They refuse to be treated as cogs in the machine, they do not want themselves to be measured in terms of utility, they resent being considered imbeciles, they reject double standards in Church and in society, they protest against meaningless conventions and empty values, they forcibly resist a repressive society

of elders, they hate being victims of an unjust social order, they shudder at the prospects of a nuclear holocaust brought about by power-crazy leaders in the East or West, they rebel at anything that has the semblance of injustice, they feel themselves alienated, disenchanted, suppressed and oppressed — in fact they count themselves *prophets of protest*, and they are not fully wrong !

If God could make a prophet of one who confessed, "Look, I do not know how to speak, I am a child" (Jer 1·6-8), why does the Church refuse to recognize the youth for what they are, and to make use of their astounding energies for the service of the Church and of the society ?

In fact Vatican II rightly points out the importance of youth for the Church in her various ministries They should be given adequate and practical formation in the various fields of Church ministries such as liturgy, catechesis and the various apostolates, etc. (AA 12 30), not neglecting a thorough grounding in civic, political, cultural and social sciences (GS 89,75, AA 12), so that they are better equipped to play a purposeful role both in the Church and in society, in the creation of a just order and the ideal of "the universal man" (GS 61)

The prophetic words of Pope John Paul II to the youth of Kenya, (and hence, to the youth of the Church and the world), are indeed a call to them to be what they are, *prophets of selfless love, service and daring* "Young people, be yourselves Be young people, and reach out to each other in generosity and fraternal service Be young people, and do not let your hearts know selfishness or greed. Be young people, and let your songs reveal your daring and your vision for the future"[10]

Will the Church awaken to the call of the Pope ? Will the Church accept the dynamic and prophetic worth of her youth ? Will the youth, in their turn, rise up, amid hazards, to prove what they are capable of ? If so, we shall have a bright future for the Church and the world

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry in caring

The Bible does not negate the possibility of *female prophets* ('nebia') Miriam (Ex 15:20), Debora (Jud 4:4-5), the wife of Isaiah (Is 8·3), Hulda (2 Kgs 22 14-20), the false prophetess Noadiah (Neh 6. 14), and in the NT, Anna (Lk 2:36-39), the daughters of Philip (Acts 21·9), and Jezebel the false prophetess (Rev 2:20-23)— all play their role, though in a minor key !

10. Ng'weno H., Caggiano P., *John Paul II in Kenya*, Nairobi, 1980, p. 16.

Though it included *women* whenever the general role of the laity was intended, yet Vatican II too has only grudgingly touched upon them and their contribution to the Church and the world.[11] Even here Vatican II has failed to bring to light the specific role of women in a field that is their own — tenderness and mercy, compassion and caring.

Admitting that a woman can play her prophetic role in the domestic, ecclesiastical and national realms, yet her unique contribution, as a mother, actual or potential, needs to be highlighted.

It is due to both the heritage of the past and the guilt of the present, in the Church and in society, that the potentiality of woman in the *realm of her motherhood* is not fully exploited. In this sphere the past can never simply provide an ideal according to which the future should be constructed.

One may not overlook the fact that when the Bible wants to present God in his loving tenderness, compassion and caring (cf. *rehamim* — maternal womb), it has recourse only to the image of a mother (Is 42. 14; 46: 3; 49: 15, 66: 13), for which we in India have the symbol of Ardhanārīśwara.[12]

An age as characterized by violence, destruction and ruthless murders as ours, needs apostles and *prophets of non-violence* of the calibre of Gandhi and Martin Luther King Experience testifies to the fact that non-violence is less evident in man than in woman, that the non-violent force of love and caring is found more naturally in women than in men (with exceptions on both sides)

In India, the oppression of women starts already at the womb,[13] and it later leaves its sad mark both in the Church and in society. A prophetic role is called for to fight against this unjust oppression not only in the social, cultural, economic, political, familial and ecclesiastical spheres, but more especially *in the sphere that is specifically feminine.* The Church is a *prophetess* when she takes up the cudgels to defend women's rights. But her prophetism is at its highest when she plays her role in a ministry basically linked with life (her motherhood), for it is there she is at her best since she knows what life is and how to save it.

---

11. Cf. AA 9: the statement on women, concerning their role in society and in the apostolate, was added only at the last draft ! GS 52 speaks about their domestic, cultural and social life; GS 60 talks of their place in all areas of life; GS 9 mentions *the equality of men and women; GS 29 affirms full personal rights to be granted to* women in all walks of life.

12. "Ardhanarīśwara" is the representation in one image, of the male (Śiva) and the female (Śakti) principle of the deity (in Śaivite religion).

13. Any Indian hospital knows that the news of the birth of a female child brings the blood pressure of people concerned, remarkably down !

Who does not need a finger to be guided by, or a hand to be clasped ? Who does not yearn for an embracing arm and the warmth of a throbbing heart ? The mother anguished at an unwanted pregnancy, an unwed girl at an abortion-for-the-asking clinic, the bride thrown out of the house as the result of an inhuman dowry system that treats young women worse than goods in a market, youth, men and women, oversensitive and insecure, trapped victims of drugs, narcotics and alcoholism, parched mouths yearning for the square meal of a week, unemployed youth cursing their stars at the lack of job opportunities, men and women at the prime of their lives numbering their days in the hospital bed -these sights have become part of the Third World experience Justice is their right, but mercy is what they first need It is the woman who is most needed here. Even the men among us would like the woman in us to take over in such situations For it is not by justice alone that one heals the festering wounds in human society, but by mercy (cf Ex 34: 6).[14]

It is this prophetic function of a woman we call *caring*, which includes the ministry of healing, comforting, consoling, encouraging, tenderness and charity, for which woman is the best qualified, as the Nobel Laureate Mother Teresa is testifying to

The rich potential of religious and lay women in the Church should be exploited by the Church for this *ministry of being with*, the *ministry of caring* or the *ministry to life*. If in the ministry of the early Church "Christian charity manifested itself in the care of the poor, for widows and orphans, in visits to brethren in prison . . . and in social action in time of calamities like famine, earthquake, pestilence or war"[15], it is the woman who, by her very nature, is best suited in the Church today to bring to the cold-hearted human world the rich warmth of Christian love The Church will be the poorer if she does not make use of this untapped energy and potential in her service to the world.

We have highlighted here only the caring aspect of the prophetic charism in women But there is a whole new and complex range of tasks both within and outside the Church for which the woman is as qualified as man, and they can be entrusted unreservedly to women What we have said about laywomen in general applies also to *religious*

14 "The quality of mercy is not strained . it is twice blest; it blesseth him that gives and him that takes .It is an attribute of God himself; And earthly power doth then show likest God's, when mercy seasons justice... That in the course of justice none of us should see salvation; we do pray for mercy; and the same prayer doth teach us all to render the deeds of mercy" (Shakespeare, *Merchant of Venice*). cf. Dt 5:9-10. Pss 86:15; 103:8; 130:3-7; 145:8, etc.

15. Chadwick H., *The Early Church*, London, 1967, p. 56.

women who are doing already yeomen service both in the Church and in society. Let us, for God's sake, stop paying lip-service to the principle of equality of women in the Church, and start applying equal standards to men and women *in reality*. Let us not look at women as subordinate helpers and auxiliaries to be exploited to our advantage, but "recognize without reserve that women have equal value and equal rights with men".[16]

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry in daring

a) By her nature as a reality *'ad extra'*, the Church must be constantly in *dialogue with the world* A purely negative outlook on the world is Manicheanism pure and simple, and has to be rejected outright. On the contrary, nothing genuinely human should fail to raise an echo in the heart of every Christian (GS 1, 4, 14, 30, 34).

The religion that the prophets expounded and defended was not an escape from things and people, but one deeply concerned with both, so much so that religion did not merely consist of rituals and periodic public worship, but of daily obedience to God and his righteous demands. Religion in itself was not rejected by the prophets, but it was the ritual abuses that came in for strong condemnation. It is a passionate indignation over legalistic ritualism divorced from a zeal for moral integrity and social justice that makes them *prophets of confrontation* (cf Is 1: 10-17, 58: 1-12; Am 5. 21-27, Hos 5: 1-7, 6: 1-6, 10: 1-8; Jer 7 1-15; Mic 6: 7-8 etc.), confrontation with the *status quo*, confrontation with a religion without works (Jam 2: 14-17).

In the world of today, both at its macro-level of continents, countries, cities and towns and the micro-level of villages, hamlets and slums, what is appalling and actually sinful is *the socio-economic chasm* that separates and secludes the rich from the poor; the powerful from the weak; the oppressor from the oppressed; the unjust dictatorial regimes from the voiceless multitudes.

No truly religious-minded person can overlook this blatant injustice very often perpetrated in the name of religion, wealth, power and politics, and shirk his or her *earthly responsibility*. Those "who think that religion consists in acts of worship alone and in the discharge of certain moral obligations and who imagine that they can plunge themselves into earthly affairs in such a way as to imply that these are altogether divorced from religious life" (GS 43) are not authentic religious persons. This split between religion and life is among the

16. Rahner K., *Theological Investigations*, Vol. 8, New York, 1971, pp. 81-86.

more serious errors of our age, a scandal, which has been decried by the prophets of the OT (cf. Is 58 1-12) and by Jesus Christ himself (Mt 23. 3-23; Mk 7: 10-13).

If the "glory of God is man fully alive" (Irenaeus), then one of the *primary concerns of a prophet should be man himself.* Man's call to communion with God and his being created "in the image of God" (Gen 1. 27) remind us that the beginning, subject and the goal of all social institutions (including religion) is man himself. "Man is the source, centre and purpose of all economic and social life" (GS 63) He is no more an automaton, a cog in the wheel, but a being endowed with dignity Hence, any individual suffering from a lack of human dignity through injustice, oppression, poverty, hunger, discrimination, etc. on the basis of colour and caste, no less than the silent majority oppressed by despotic regimes, should arouse the prophet in every Christian [17] The development of the personality, the vindication of the right to live, the safeguarding of dignity and liberty of expression, are all fertile areas for the prophet to work in "By the virtue of the Gospel committed to her, the Church proclaims the inalienable rights of man", says the Council (GS 41). But proclaiming is only the beginning of the prophetic ministry, which would be meaningless unless accompanied by supportive actions, especially in the socio-economic levels.

Often enough the elements that work behind the human malice are *social structures* unjust, oppressive, inhuman and diabolic. The wealthy industrialized nations of the West (the Soviet Union included) do lucrative business in selling military hardware to the impoverished non-industrial nations of the Third World, whose undernourished population cannot afford it! The white race claims to know what is best for the Africans, and it turns out to be that what is best for the Africans is what serves the white man's own interest! Any meaningful North-South dialogue is vitiated by the politics of East-West affiliations.

It is a shame that people who in their private lives are morally upright and responsible, pillars of respectability in society and the Church, accept without any criticism the ideological assumptions behind these atrocities. More than prophets from the Third World we need here *prophets for the Third World,* from the nations and classes and social groups of the First and Second worlds, to raise their prophetic voice against such inhuman situations.

17 Note the strong words of Gratian: "Feed the man dying of hunger, because if you have not feed him, you have killed him". *Decretum* C 21, *dist.* LXXXVI, in *PL* 54, p. 591 A.

But societies and institutions do not repent like individuals, for their structures are so pervasive, complex and interest-rooted, that they resist change by deliberate effort. Any road to repentance, change and renewal always involves some sort of agony or inner crisis.

Confronted in his conscience, the prophet is here forced to make a terrible decision. Is the change to be brought about by being prepared "to kill and be killed"? The Christian conscience does not sanction repulsive acts of terrorism, which is just replacing one form of dictatorship (power structure) by another. But not to encourage the Berrigans and the Helder Camaras among us would be a crime against humanity itself *Conscientious objectors*[18] *of the calibre of Gandhi* are the need of the hour Vatican II's cautious nod to the "right of revolution" is to the point here: "Where citizens are oppressed by a public authority. . . .it is legitimate for them to defend their own rights and the rights of their fellow citizens against the abuse of authority" (GS 74).

b) This brings us to the problem of *peace and war* Modern science, the nuclear arms race, international misunderstandings, tensions and balance of power tactics, etc , have brought the whole human race to an acute crisis.

But "any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas along with the population, is a crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation" (GS 80). We must "strain every muscle in working for the time when all war can be completely outlawed by international consent" (GS 82).

The nuclear problem, though political and military, is also inherently a moral and spiritual problem of unprecedented dimensions, affecting the survival and well being of the entire humanity.

Because of its threat to the human race it has to be resisted with all the strength of every prophet. Extraordinarily prophetic in this context bas been the pastoral letter of the American Bishops, one of the finest documents the American Catholic hierarchy has ever produced, in daringly addressing the greatest moral problem threatening the world, knowing full well they were open to criticism on all sides, especially from the architects of their national defence policy. They were perhaps treated as unpatriotic, naive, meddling in things beyond their competence, but their utterance gave encouragement to men and women of good will all over the world.

18. GS 79: "It seems right that laws make humane provision for the case of those who for reasons of conscience refuse to bear arms".

The document itself is not the final word on this perplexing matter. It is the first word, a call for the formation of *a community of conscience*. Since any war is too important to be left to the generals, we are all called to exercise a prophetic role and call a halt to the madness and folly of a nuclear holocaust. We can achieve the goal of a peaceful society by challenging the world powers with the scandal and stumbling block of the true Gospel message, by allowing the Lord to "teach us his ways, that we may walk in his paths. . .and beat their (our) swords into ploughshares and their (our) spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2: 2-4, Mic 4: 1-3).

c) Still another field where the prophet for the Third World must dare to venture is the adaptation of the Gospel message to all nations and races. *Inculturation* should become the law of all evangelization. Varied cultures and modes of living and expression should find their way in the living and diffusion of the Christian message. People in Africa, and especially in Asia (with its ancient, rich and varied culture), expect rightly that Christianity and the Christian message be enriched by their local garb and colour. The Church is not foreign or inimical to any culture and must find herself at home in every one. This *cultural transcendence* needs daring experimentations and trials. Prophets like Ricci, De Nobili and Beschi have only pioneered the process, the continuation of which needs prophets among us with imagination and erudition, vision and daring, experience and a readiness to take risks.

In conclusion to this section we must say that the appalling failures of the Church in the realm of social justice, threat of a nuclear extermination and inculturation, are not matters that can be solved by saying a *mea culpa* for omissions and sins of the past, but need an active *prophetic daring* to plunge and be plunged into the unknown depth of God's ways of acting.

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry in discerning

Disturbingly unfamiliar, but gaining currency in recent times in the Catholic vocabulary, thanks to the prophetic Pope John XXIII, is the term *signs of the times*.

Moral choices are never simply between good and evil. Hence the Church and individuals must make theirs the "duty of scrutinizing the signs of the times and interpreting them in the light of the Gospel" (GS 4, 11). For any goal to be pursued or action to be undertaken on behalf of the human family we should recognize and understand the world in which we live, its expectations and yearnings, the needs and the desires of the people, the trends and the movements at work in society.

The prophet is not moving here on the beaten track where he knows what he should do or not do, but in the overgrown forest where he is forced *to improvise paths* and act in surrender and submission to the Spirit who throws new light on each situation. The modern prophet has *to find out the will of God* with regard to his own life, the life of the Church, society and the world at large, as the prophets of the OT and Christ himself did. Unless he dies to himself, he finds it impossible to overcome the obstacles within him which prevent him from being truly open to the Spirit and doing the will of God.

The true Christian prophet is one who, being aware of Jesus' promise that the Holy Spirit will teach him everything (Jo 14:26), yields and surrenders himself totally to the Spirit; he is one who does not rely on signs and miracles, but goes through the dying process of a prophet and thus removes from his life any resistence to Christ (Gal 2:20; Eph 3:19; Mt 16:24); he is one who 'lets go' his whims and fancies and 'lets in' the values of Christ; he is one who in the word of God, and in prayer seeks *to attune himself to the Spirit*; he is one who experiences peace and joy in the course of action he has decided upon in the light of the word of God and prayer (cf. Gal 5:22-23).

When he has thus refused to lean on his own intelligence, reasoning and understanding, God's will is made known to him, and he will hear *the inner voice of the Spirit*, which may come to him in prayer, ministry, reading of the word of God and in the other humdrum duties of his life. It may come to him as a prophecy for himself or for others, exhortation, admonition, teaching or even foretelling of the future. In the final analysis *the discerning prophet* is one who being Spirit-filled becomes sensitive to God's voice and embraces it in serenity.[19]

Today more than ever, when uncertainty and confusion reign supreme both in religions and in society, the need for this *ministry of discernment* is felt by all. We need prophets who will discern for us the will of God; we need people who will be able to discern prophets and their true prophetic worth. With a slight change may we not say, "Would that all the Lord's people were *discerners*, that the Lord would put his *discerning spirit* upon them"?

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry of those far and near

Scholars have rightly interpreted Num 11:29 as an attempt by the Elohist to introduce into the Mosaic tradition the strange un-Israelite phenomenon of ecstatic prophecy. "The end which the story tries to

19. Maloney G. A., *Listen, Prophets*, New Jersey, pp. 131-43.

serve is the legitimation of this new religious phenomenon which may have caused the orthodox a good deal of perplexity. The story may actually be taken as evidence of an acceptance of the ecstatic movement into the institutions of Yahwism, or at least an etiology of the prophetic movement which gave it legitimation".[20]

This brings us to the consideration of prophetic phenomenon (whatever form it may take) outside the Catholic Church (by whomsoever it is exercised — non-Catholics, non-Christians, etc.). The Church which may no longer be identified with the culture of the West (GS 42), but embraces a whole range of national histories and cultures, will continue to be the 'little flock', despite all efforts at honest missionary endeavours. "Hence she will recognize her role still more clearly as the leaven in the lump that is the unified history of the world, as the 'archsacrament', i.e., as the sign of salvation which God has set up in the dimension of history for the salvation of those, too, who are not numbered among her members as a visible society".[21]

Hence, religious institutions, sects and movements outside the Catholic Church too can play their prophetic role. We need not only a certain tolerance, but an active cooperation with other Christian Churches and ecclesial communities by way of achieving the same goal (GS 40, 90), a positive and realistic appraisal of trends and movements at work in the human city, a participation in international bodies and forums for the construction of a peaceful, just and fraternal community of nations (GS 41, 90), an appreciation and acknowledgement of all that is good in other religions: and this is *giving recognition to the existence of the prophetic phenomenon outside the Church.* For "the Church gratefully acknowledges that in her community life no less than in her individual sons, she receives a variety of helps from men of every rank and condition For whoever promotes the human community at the family level, culturally, in its economic, social and political dimensions, both nationally and internationally, such a one, according to God's design, is contributing greatly to the Church community as well, to the extent that it depends on things outside itself" (GS 44).

The prophetic voice of the Council reaches its climax in the concluding paragraphs of GS. Recognizing a lawful diversity in the Church and hence the need of dialogue within the Church herself, it calls also for dialogue with "those not yet living in full communion with her", dialogue with "all those who acknowledge God", dialogue with "those who oppress her and harass her in manifold ways" (GS 92).

20. Von Rad, G., *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. II, London, 1965, p. 9
21. Rahner, K., *Theol. Investigations*, Vol. 8, p. 81.

and even dialogue with atheists, though atheism itself should be rejected root and branch (GS 20, 21).

For since all people, *believers and unbelievers* alike, can and ought to work for the rightful betterment of this world, and since the Church herself does not always have at hand the solution to particular problems (GS 33), she should acknowledge and welcome, accept and promote the *prophetic ministry of others even outside* her visible membership. The contrary would be "not the maintenance of the dignity of the human person, but its annihilation" (GS 41). The Church which is catholic becomes truly prophetic only when she recognizes the catholicity (*universality*) of prophecy outside her.

Prophetic phenomenon — a ministry of affirmation and hope

Since the Church "has a call to *form the family of God's children during the present history* of the human race, and to keep increasing it until the Lord returns" (GS 40), and since it is "constituted in the *world* as a society by Christ" (GS 40; LG 8, 9), "it must go forward *together with humanity* and experience the same earthly lot which the world does" (GS 40).

The world we live in has been given by God to humankind *to be used and perfected* (Gen 1, 27-28). It is given to us like the talents in the parable of Jesus (Mt 25: 14-30; Lk 19: 11-27). Hence, there is nothing irreligious in the proper use of the world and its goods, nor is it anything to be uneasy about

"The expectation of the new earth must not weaken but rather stimulate our concern for cultivating this one. For here grows the body of a new human family, a body which even now is able to give some kind of foreshadowing of the new age" (GS 39, 21). Hence a *positive affirmation* of all that is good in the world — in man, in society, in science and technology, in ideas and incentives, in healing works of mercy and social struggles, in manual labour as well as artistic and cultural endeavours — is an authentication of God himself who is the origin, existence and goal of all, and who "animates, purifies and strengthens those noble longings by which the human family strives to make its life more human and to render the whole earth submissive to this goal" (GS 38). It is clear then that people are not prohibited by the Christian message from building up the world, or forced to neglect the welfare of the earth and humanity itself; rather are they more stringently bound to do it (GS 34).

This obviously leads to a *hope* which, on the one hand, is based on the affirmation of the world and at the same time goes beyond it

to "the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God" (Heb 11: 10).

Now *Jesus Christ* himself is *our hope* in this world since "he who has seen me (Him) has seen the Father" (Jo 12: 45; 14: 9; Col 1: 15). In a world radically changed from the nomadic, agricultural and simple life of the Israelites, to the urban, technological and nuclear age of our times, modern man experiences *a constant*, in which to hope "This constant" itself is an *unfathomable beyondness*. There lies the risk of hope — to "let go", under the powerful hand of God, in the dark.

"To live in hope therefore means to live dangerously, for we stake our lives on God alone".[22] To live in hope is to recognize ourselves for what we are — utter inability and nothingness; to live in hope means to let ourselves go and take the risk of letting God take total possession of ourselves; to live in hope means to live with the "unfathomableness" of the other as well as the world; to live in hope means not to dominate God in the other, nor to control any factors in human love; to live in hope means to let the other be and live as the other.

"The prophet has, therefore, *the virginal hope of Mary*",[23] surrendering himself to God in his work, in the innumerable incarnations taking place in every human situation. Hope puts him completely at God's disposition; hope allows God to be God and does not dictate terms to him. In this sense all of us, like Abraham (Gen 12: 1-8. Heb 11: 8-10), Mary (Lk 1: 38) and Jesus (Heb 6: 17-18) are called to be *prophets of hope* for a world immersed in hopelessness, pessimism and fatalism.

Conclusion

Given the variety and multifaceted nature of the prophetic charism, shall we then assent to the Joshuan prohibition, "My Lord Moses, forbid them"? (Num 11: 28). Or shall we accept the Mosaic challenge, "Would that all the Lord's people were prophets"? (Num 11: 29) The "sustaining, provocative and impelling, forward-looking, at once athirst and quenching"[24] statement of Moses is surely a call and at the same time a command not to quench the Spirit nor to despise prophesying, but to test everything and to hold fast to what is good (1 Thes 5: 20-21).

---

22. Maloney, G. A., *ibid.*, p. 106.
23. *ibid.* p. 107.
24. Levandowski G., *Word and Event*, No. 51, XIII-2-1983, p. 10.

If Jesus Christ is *the word-enfleshed prophet, the absolute bringer of salvation* (Acts 3: 17-26; Dt 18: 18, etc.),[25] it does not mean that prophecy has simply ceased in the Church after Jesus; it means that Jesus cannot be surpassed in the further history of revelation and salvation, and it accentuates the fact that "the only prophets are those who *strive to uphold Jesus' message in its purity*, who attest that message and make it relevant to their day".[26]

Being the sacrament of the permanent presence of Jesus Christ, *the one incomparable prophet*, the Church participates in his prophetic mission. In this sense, within the fundamental and definitive prophetism of Jesus, there is the prophetic element exhibited *in the Church* in all her spontaneous charisms which work in and for the Church (as in the case of Eldad and Medad). By the same logic Christian humility and openness calls for the recognition and acceptance of prophets "outside" the Church.

25. "The prophet like Moses" (mentioned in Dt 18:18), may refer to the prophetic movement as a whole or to an individual (like Joshua or Samuel). But the NT finds here an allusion to Jesus the Messiah (cf. Jo 1:21; Acts 3:22; 7:37).

26. Rahner K., "Prophetism" in *Sacramentum Mundi*, Vol 5, New York, 1970, p. 112.

Annual Bibliography of Christianity in India 1981, *Bombay, Heras Institute of Indian History and Culture*, 1982. Pp. 39.

Annual Bibliography of Christianity in India 1982, *ibid.*, 1983. Pp 64. Rs 25, $ 5, each.

It is fortunate that Fr John Correia-Afonso S.J. took up the challenge of publishing this annual bibliography. He began in 1980 with a cyclostyled pilot issue. The response to it was so positive that he can now publish it more regularly in printed form.

Thus, the gap left by my own mimeographed *Bibliography of Christianity in India is filled*. Mine was published in 1976 for the sake of those scholars who had accepted to work on the project of a 6-volume history of Christianity in India. That Bibliography included in its scope such entries as could be found in one or the other library in India.

The scope of the Heras Institute publication is wider. It aims at completeness. Not only does it include publications which are not available in this country, but it covers a greater number of topics, some of which are not strictly historical, or at least are not exclusively historical. This would be the case of Socio-Economic and Anthropological Studies, Social and Medical Welfare, etc.

One of the greatest assets the Institute could have was the active and ceaseless collaboration of Dr Bernard Anderson, retired librarian of Bombay University and consultant to the Ministry of Education and Social Welfare on library matters. Actually, the preparation and publishing of this bibliography is largely due to his talent, zest and perseverance.

These fascicules are a *must* for all our research and educational institutions. Such instruments of work are essential to prepare seminars and other meetings concerning Christian action in India.

E. R. Hambye, S.J.

The Morality of Fast unto Death

Felix PODIMATTAM, O.F.M.Cap

Introduction

THE recent stir of the fishermen of Kerala has served to focus attention on several important issues such as the miserable plight of the fisherfolk, the brazen injustice meted out to them by vested interests and the powers that be, the phenomenon of priests and nuns directly involved in agitation, the dubious ability of the hierarchy to control such involvement, and last but not least, the moral legitimacy of fast unto death (Sr Philomene Mary and some others were reportedly willing to sacrifice their lives for the cause of the oppressed fishermen). Here I intend to discuss at some length the last issue, namely, the ethical aspects of fasting unto death for a noble cause. The following reflections are offered as points for thought and are not to be regarded as complete or certain.

Before we proceed, a few observations seem to be in order. First, we need to give much more thought than hitherto to the problem of where to draw the line between the sin of suicide and the virtue of self-sacrifice. Second, any mental scheme that places Sr Philomene Mary in the same category as the unfortunate suicides who take their life because of personal disappointment or weakness, grossly fails to do her justice

Third, as more and more of our young people resort to such tactics, as it seems likely, the Church will be challenged to provide better answers and to assume a bolder stand than before. The comfortable reliance on the policy of conformity with the *status quo* when vested interests are out to manipulate the national and state machinery to suit their whims, will hardly stand rational, much less Christian scrutiny. We cannot, moreover, reconcile ourselves to the idea that "order", regardless of whether it is built on justice or injustice, is always preferable to the "chaos" that might result from disturbing that order.

Undoubtedly, we are all steeped in rank pregmatism. Before launching an action, we tend to ask: "How practical is it ?" Consequently, the prophet and the martyr are more likely to embarass than edify us. An "expert" of the Second Vatican Council is reported to

have stated that "we don't encourage martyrdom" and that, to avoid this, the Church is prepared to make "almost any adjustment".[1] The manner in which we view and deal with the problems concerning, say, caste, war, social and economic iniquities, seems just to prove this. The pursuit of the so-called "golden mean" seems to be our main concern. Where is our understanding for the "extremist" who insists upon the total rejection of evil, and thus endangers our cosy ways of Christian living ? *It is high time that we seriously ponder over our obligation to protest* against every unjust order in the most effective way possible, even at the risk of disrupting that order and of inviting dire consequences.

1. *The Position of the Kerala Bishops is Understandable*

The bishops of Kerala had every reason to be apprehensive of the "fast unto death" undertaken by some priests and nuns. Before the agitation of the fishermen was called off, the Council of Bishops of Kerala issued a statement urging the fisher-workers to end their action. In a statement issued from the residence of the Archbishop of Trivandrum, the bishops said that a fast unto death was not desirable, however well-intentioned it might be. It is noteworthy that the bishops used great discretion, and in their disapproval they were more concerned about the precedent that would be created and its pastoral implications, than by the purely moral dimension of the case in question.

Undoubtedly, accepting a fast unto death at this juncture could give rise to serious abuses. The number of those who are willing to lay down their lives for "noble causes" could expand indefinitely to the point of jeopardising the sacredness of human life. Besides, no civilized society can afford to leave such momentous a decision like sacrificing one's life, to the discretion of individuals.

Secondly, the faithful at large could hardly be expected to distinguish easily between self-sacrifice and suicide. There is no doubt regarding the moral illegitimacy of suicide which is the direct and deliberate taking of one's life for a selfish motive. An individual is neither the *author of his or her own life nor its owner. Having been entrusted* with life for the sole purpose of serving God and humanity, no one has the right to decide about its duration. Suicide, therefore, is a sin against God inasmuch as it is a repudiation of His sovereignty and a rejection of His love. It is an offence against oneself in that it is an act against the proper love of self; and an offence against society insofar as it deprives one's family and society of a member prematurely, causing them untold pain and humiliation. However, suicide is far more often a less voluntary act than we have hitherto assumed.

1. Cf. Gordon Zahn, *War, Conscience and Dissent*, London, 1967; p. 192.

Thirdly, representing as they do the pastoral office of the Church, the bishops could not be expected to accept readily the latest views on this moral issue. We must remember that the divergence of opinion among moralists on the morality of direct killing of one self is of recent origin. Hence pastoral prudence would dissuade the bishops from approving the newer views on the matter.

Understandably, the statement of the bishops was pastoral rather than theological. Pastoral statements, in that they are meant to help the faithful deepen their commitment to Christ, can be expected to be based on only those doctrines that are well established in the Church New theories, though valid, will not find a place in them inasmuch as pastoral statements always avoid theological speculations and propose only teachings that are commonly accepted. This is not to say that pastors should not be conversant with the latest theological developments on various burning issues of the day.

2. *The Newer View Regarding the Morality of Fast unto Death*

There is the traditional view that fast unto death is a form of suicide and therefore never to be permitted for any reason whatsoever. The view would regard such a fast as directly killing of oneself insofar as one refuses to take food, the ordinary means of sustaining life. The end may be praiseworthy, but the means one uses to achieve that end, namely, the omission of an action that preserves life, cannot but be intrinsically evil. The distinction between doing something that results in death and failing to do something as a result of which someone dies is not of considerable moral significance simply because one is an act of commission and the other an act of omission. If suicide is direct killing of oneself through an act of commission, fast unto death is direct killing of oneself through an act of omission. This being the case, we have direct killing of the innocent in both the instances.

The newer view, without giving undue importance to the distinction between direct and indirect killing, goes straight to the problem whether it is morally permissible to kill oneself directly for a noble cause. Several theologians affirm clearly that it is.

According to Daniel Maguire, "It may not be excluded that direct self-killing may be a good moral action, in spite of the strong presumptions against it".[2]

Denis O'Callaghan discusses thoroughly and accurately the traditional formulations of direct and indirect killing, but feels that eventually everyone runs into human situations that are too complex

2. Richard McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology*, Washington, 1981, p. 442; Daniel Maguire, "The Freedom to Die", *Commonweal*, 40 (1972) pp. 423-27.

to be helped by such formulations. Thus the terms direct and indirect self-killing are inadequate to grasp the real difference between [illegible] and self-sacrifice. Some direct self-killings conform in human terms to the notion of sacrifice rather than to that of suicide; e.g., the case of a spy who decides to take his life to protect his comrades, perhaps even his country, from the harm he could cause through revelation of classified information.[3]

For Franz Bockle, any killing is justified by what he calls a "rigorous weighing of values". Applying this to self-killing, he says: "To ask about the eventual licitness of suicide is to ask about the good whose realization could justify the evil of causing the loss of life. Hence, in view of modern methods of extortion, suicide to ward off a great harm to one's own countrymen is widely held to be morally permissible".[4]

Charles Curran deals with the case of a spy who takes a pill to kill himself lest secrets affecting the lives of many other people be revealed. In this case the killing of self is the means by which a good effect is accomplished. Curran argues that on the basis of proportionate reason a spy can take a pill to end his life and thus conceal knowledge which would be detrimental to the lives of many other individuals.[5]

Bernard Haring asks the question whether we can designate every direct self-killing as suicide. According to him, the definition of a natural law principle should always bring out in the first place the values and non-values that are at stake. For instance, we have the principle that suicide is immoral, in other words, against the basic vocation of man But Haring does not think that it is all that easy to give an ethical definition of suicide. The Japanese nobleman who performs hara-kiri when he is condemned to death does not intend to commit suicide. Socrates, who drank the deadly drink according to the law of his country, did not have the intention of committing suicide. The pilot who goes down with his plane on an important military target sacrifices his life rather than commits suicide. Häring asks whether a spy who does away with his life in order to protect an important secret, can be said to commit suicide.[6]

Dietrich Bonhoeffer also supports the view that there can be a legitimate sacrifice of one's life. The right to life must be safeguarded

3. Denis O'Callaghan, "May a Spy Take His Life ?", *Irish Ecclesiastical Record*, 103 (1965) pp. 259-64.

4 R. McCormick, *Notes on Moral Theology*, pp. 596-97; Franz Böckle, "Recht auf menschwürdiges Sterben", *Evangelische Kommentare*, 8 (1975) pp. 73-74.

5. Charles Curran, *Ongoing Revision in Moral Theology*, Notre Dame, Indiana, 1975, p. 150.

6. Bernard Häring, "Dynamism and Continuity in a Personalistic Approach to Natural Law", in *Norms and Context in Christian Ethics*, Cufka and Ramsey, eds., New York, 1968, pp. 214-15; B. Häring, *Medical Ethics*, Slough, England, 1974, p. 72.

through freedom. It is therefore not an absolute right, as it has its counterpart, the freedom to offer one's life in sacrifice. If a prisoner takes his life for fear that under torture he will betray his country, his family or his friends, or if the enemy threatens reprisals unless a certain statement is surrendered to them and it is only by his own free death that a soldier can spare his country grievous harm, then the self-killing is so strongly coloured by the ideal of sacrifice that it will be impossible to condemn the deed. In view of such cases the prohibition of self-killing can scarcely be said to be so absolute as to preclude the freedom of sacrificing one's life.[7]

John Dedek also speaks in the same line as the abovementioned theologians For him, self-killing for a proportionate good is far from wrong.[8]

3. *The Theological Basis of the Newer View*

Space limitations allow me to discuss only a few of the many theological reasons why several theologians consider self-killing for a noble cause morally permissible.

A. *Self-Killing for a Noble Cause Hardly Different from the Traditionally Permitted Indirect Killing.*

According to traditional teaching there can be circumstances wherein an individual may licitly relinquish his life. Occasions may call for self-sacrifice, as in the case of a soldier in the performance of his duty, of a person defending a friend who is unjustly attacked, of a doctor or nurse ministering to the infectious sick, or of a believer witnessing to the faith during persecution. During a shipwreck, passengers are not blamed for jumping into the sea to meet a certain death if the life-boats are overcrowded. If need be, a passenger chosen by lot may be forced to jump into the sea to save the others from death. During war it is allowed to blow up a fortification or sink a ship when there is no prospect of holding them against the enemy, even if this inevitably results in oneself being killed in the act. During war a pilot may go down with his plane on an important military target killing himself in the process. Jumping from a burning building in order to escape from fire is not culpable even if a certain death is foreseen. Traditional moral theology went even so far as to permit a woman to leap from a high tower to an inevitable death to save herself from a libertine who would violate her.[9]

---

7. Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Ethics*, London, 1966, pp. 166 170, 171.
8. John Dedek, *Human Life: Some Moral Issues*, New York, 1972; *Contemporary Medical Ethics*, New York, 1975.
9. Henry Peschke, *Christian Ethics* II, Bangalore, 1981, pp. 347-48.

We have in the Polish Franciscan St Maximilian Kolbe a conspicuous example of self-sacrifice for one's brethren. An inmate of the concentration camp at Auschwitz, he willingly offered himself in order to save the life of the father of a family, who was condemned to death by starvation.

It seems scarcely possible to draw any distinction of principle between fast unto death for a noble cause and the cases of self-killing listed above. In all these cases an individual's decision becomes the cause of his death.

B *The True Meaning of "Thou Shalt Not Kill"*

The fifth commandment reads: "Thou shalt not kill" (Exodus 20 13). Were we to understand these words literally, even killing of animals would not be permissible. Yet traditional moral theology allows killing of animals for our use and even of human beings in certain well-defined circumstances, viz., in self-defence, in war, in capital punishment. Thus the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill" does not imply absolute inviolability of human life, for if it were so, life could not be taken in any circumstance.

Under what principle does traditional moral theology exempt certain human killings from the purview of "Thou shalt not kill"? How did it ever come to know that killing in self-defence, in war or in capital punishment does not contravene the fifth commandment? Evidently, not from the wording of the commandment which is clear enough: "Thou shalt not kill". In fact, we know it from our shared moral experience and from right reason.

Then what is the precise meaning of, "Thou shalt not kill"? According to traditional moral theology it means that it is forbidden to kill *innocent* human beings. Only innocent human life is said to be absolutely inviolable. Yet we have examples in which traditional moral theology allows the killing of innocent human beings, e.g., the termination of ectopic pregnancy wherein the embryo begins to develop in the fallopian tube, or the removal of a cancerous pregnant womb, both resulting in the inevitable death of the fetus inside. If innocent human life were absolutely inviolable, how could such measures be ever allowed? At this juncture we are told that what is absolutely forbidden is only the *direct* destruction of innocent life; indirect destruction of the same can sometimes be allowed. How do we know that indirect taking of innocent life is at times morally right? Is it indicated in the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill"? Do we not once again resort to our shared moral experience and to right reason?

Granted that it is only the direct killing of human beings that is absolutely forbidden, how to justify the killing of a mad man in self-defence as allowed by traditional moral theology ? Is not a mad man innocent ? To be sure, here too a restrictive interpretation of the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill", will be forthcoming. It will be explained that when traditional theologians condemn the killing of "innocent" persons, they are using the word "innocent" in its basic meaning of *non-nocens* (not harming). Accordingly it is not wrong to kill another if he is engaged in unjust aggression though he be innocent in the sense of "not guilty". This restrictive interpretation too is obviously based on moral experience and right reason.

The foregoing examples and comments were offered with the express purpose of showing that there are several restrictive interpretations of the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill", all of them based on the shared moral experience of humanity and on right reason We see that at every stage of the justification of the restrictive interpretations, the moral principle earlier enunciated is modified in order to rule out those cases to which the principle does not apply. And why does it not apply to such cases ? Not, evidently, because they do not in fact fall under the wording of the commandment, for they clearly do. If killing is wrong, then killing of animals is wrong. Again if killing of human beings is wrong, killing even in self-defence, in war or in capital punishment is wrong. The principle of inviolability of human life is thought to be not applicable to these cases because they are not perceived to be wrong by the shared moral experience of normal people. Through our conscience we perceive that the principle, "Thou shalt not kill" was not meant to cover actions of this sort. Hence, we already know through our moral experience and right reason that certain actions are not morally wrong and certain others are. We know this without having to appeal to any general principle: no principles are suggested, and certainly none are needed to perceive that the actions are not wrong, and every general principle proposed to cover these cases is immediately proved to be inadequate. The several restrictive interpretations of the command not to kill are not made on the basis of any principle regarding killing. They could hardly be so since they are exceptions to the principle. What has transpired here is that a certain action is perceived to be permissible quite apart from any theoretical principle, and is then simply declared to be outside the purview of the principle.

Thus it is not on the basis of any theoretical principle, but on that of moral experience and right reason that we have exempted animals from the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill". Again it is not

on the basis of any theoretical principle but on that of moral experience and right reason that we exclude killing in self-defence and similar killings from among prohibited killings. Further it is not on the basis of any theoretical principle but on that of moral experience and right reason that we regard the killing of a madman in self-defence as not going against the absolute inviolability of innocent human life. At this juncture we pose this pertinent question. May we not in the framework of the same moral experience and right reason declare with equal justification that the prohibition, "Thou shalt not kill" was not meant to cover self-killing for a noble cause ? Do not our moral experience and right reason tell us that it is morally justified for a spy to kill himself lest secrets affecting the lives of many other people be revealed ? Do not the same moral experience and right reason tell us that it is right for persons like Sr Philomene Mary to have been willing to sacrifice their life for the cause of their oppressed brothers and sisters, the fisher folk ? This explains why the general public had nothing but admiration for them in their hearts, if not on their lips, as was reflected in an editorial of *Malayala Manorama*, the largest Malayalam daily, which did not fail to admire the selfless love of Sr Philomene Mary and others because they were prepared to sacrifice their life for their suffering brothers and sisters.

What is beyond dispute is that human life is indeed a great value, but that this value is not absolute. The prohibition of direct killing of the innocent is an excellent rule, though not exceptionless Those who would take innocent life ought to clearly establish their right to do so The basic question in regard to the taking of innocent life is not whether it is direct or indirect, but how great a value has to be present to countervail the sacrifice of innocent life

The correct meaning of the fifth commandment seems to be: Do not take human life, innocent or not, without an adequate reason. The divine prohibition is aimed at every unjust destruction of life. The object of the prohibition of the fifth commandment may be said to be all unjust killing, namely, killing without a proportionately grave reason.

According to William Barclay, the commandment forbids murder specifically, and not killing in general, for the Hebrew word implies violent and unauthorized killing.[10]

C *Direct Killing of an Innocent by Itself Not Intrinsic Evil*

It is traditionally accepted that God could command one to kill another who is innocent and that a person may kill himself if positively

10. William Barclay, *The Plain Man's Guide to Ethics*, London, 1973, p. 61.

empowered to do so by God. In fact, God asked Abraham to kill his innocent son Isaac, according to the direct Biblical text.

But it is inconceivable that God could order someone to do a thing that is intrinsically evil. Hence, even as life is certainly a basic good and killing a basic evil, we may not classify them as moral good and moral evil respectively For if God can choose to do an evil for His purpose, we know thereby that such evil cannot be moral but only physical. Thus the direct killing of an innocent is by itself hardly an intrinsic evil.

Or is killing an innocent person a moral evil only because God does not permit it ? But then the whole question is how do we know whether or not He permits it. Obviously one of the ways of knowing it is through a direct revelation as was the case in several instances in the Bible. But may we not postulate another way of knowing the same thing, namely, through moral intuition, which is also a revelation of God ? If God can allow an innocent person to be killed by a divine revelatory intervention, then how can such permission be excluded just because it did not come through a direct revelatory action, but through the revelatory action mediated through human moral intuition and reasoning ?

D. *The Sacrifice of Life as an Act of Supreme Christian Love*

According to Bernard Häring, man's bodily life is entrusted to his freedom as the most precious talent. Man is not the independent lord of his life but only a steward subject to the sovereignty of God Christ typifies the way in which man can dispose of his life. He can lay it down, if need be, in the service of his fellowmen, as a witness to faith, hope and love. In placing his earthly life at the service of brotherhood, man gives the most authentic testimony to his own faith in life as a gift of God The greater the love with which man risks his life and the higher the service rendered for the common good or for a particular fellow human being, the purer is the witness to faith and hope, and the more justifiable the risk

Conclusion

In principle self-killing remains legally and morally reprehensible. But both law and morality must show tolerance in exceptional cases, just as is done in other forms of killing.

Martyrdom is the sacrifice of one's life for a greater good. There will surely always be some who are over-eager to wear the martyr's

11. B. Häring, *Medical Ethics*, pp. 69-70.

crown. This danger notwithstanding, we should not be too quick to qualify a given case. Even granting risks of error in this area, Christians would be well advised to err in this direction, rather than be inactive under the plea of caution, in striking a sure balance between the risk involved and the good to be achieved. Sr Philomene Mary and her companions can be presumed to have decided to act as they did, in conformity with their assessment of their Christian obligations in an un-Christian environment, and were they to die in their struggle on behalf of the poor fisherfolk, the final judgment, happily, would not have been ours to make

---

Bhagavadgitanuvada. A Study in Transcultural Translation By W M. CALLEWAERT and Shilanand HEMRAJ *Ranchi, Satya Bharati Publication*, 1983. Pp (xvi) 399 Rs 120 Sole Distributors Biblia Impex, 2/18 Anseri Road, New Delhi 110002

This is a very timely and informative publication, as next year marks the second centenary of the publication of the first English translation of the Bhagavad Gita by Sir Charles Wilkins The pages of this book are packed with information about the nearly 2000 different translations of the Gitā in about 75 different languages of the world. As the two authors say, the Gita is probably, after the Bible, the most translated religious work in world literature We must mention here that English was not the first language into which the Song of the Lord was translated It was preceded by the old Javanese translation (around 1000 A D.), the Arabic (1030), Marathi (1290), Braj (1320), Malayalam (1400), Persian (1600), Maithili (1615), Gujarati (1620), Kannada (1705) and Bengali (1776) versions. Soon after the English translation of 1785, the French (1787) and the Russian (1788) versions were published

Bhagavadgitānuvāda goes well beyond cataloguing each translation available and providing data about the same. It deals also with quite a number of issues connected with the Gitā, such as questions of text criticism, the various editions, the art connected with the Gitā publication, the authorship, commentaries and the philosophy of translation. To give an idea of the wealth of information provided, we shall just mention that we find in these pages a catalogue of 38 editions of the text, arranged chronologically from the *editio princeps* of Coolebrooke in 1808-9 to Belvalkar's *Critical Edition* in 1945. We find a list of 249 commentaries, arranged alphabetically; an account of 1412 translations in different Indian languages arranged alphabetically, 273 English translations, and nearly 200 in other languages, arranged according to language groups, and including the Latin version by A W Schegel in 1823 and two modern Esperanto versions ! There seem to be hardly any language or relevant information that have escaped the vigilant and diligent eyes of the two research scholars. The information given in the book is concluded with over 40 pages of closely printed additional bibliography containing around 3000 items. One does not know which to admire more: the amount of devoted scholarly service the Gitā has inspired through the centuries, or the diligence and love which our two authors have put in this joint venture. The book should not be absent from any serious library in India, nor from the personal libraries of scholars in Indian subjects. The price is quite reasonable for the material the book provides.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Satyagraha and Fast according to Gandhi

T. K. JOHN, S J

CERTAIN long forgotten Indian concepts were revived during the recent events in Kerala. Two of these are Satyagraha and the fast The following is a brief exposition of these concepts in the Gandhian literature. It will be followed by a brief reflection from a certain Christian perspective. The chief source of the exposé will be Gandhi himself, who experimented with Satyagraha and fast for over thirty years in South Africa and in India in connection with two unique historic movements

The experience of an enslaved human community was the starting point of the experiment. Young Gandhi saw the human situation with pain the Indians enslaved and exploited by the white colonizers, fragmented religiously and economically, broken in spirit, culturally wounded Gandhi wanted to respond The history of this response is his life-history, which he called "My Experiments with Truth" Ahimsa, Satyagraha, fast, civil-disobedience, non-cooperation — all are associated with that experiment. It is in and through the experience of human suffering and misery that the search was undertaken For Gandhi the whole experiment - political activity, inter-religious negotiations, social reform works, the ashram life, khadi, and other rural works — was a workshop for the discovery of the Supreme Truth he so frequently called God In other words, a genuinely integral vision of God, of life, of history, of the human person and society, operated in and through Gandhi's vision.

The basic core of that vision was the innate divinity of man This he derived from the central Hindu religious experience and tradition Vedic cosmogonism provided the foundation for it. "We may not be God but we are of God" was Gandhi's formulation of that insight. This provided him with the *élan vital* for his struggle. We are of God, not yet in and with God. To become one with Him is the goal of human life.

Gandhi was now faced with a problem. The Supreme God is said to be inaccesible, invisible, intangible, inaudible, beyond every-

thing, unlike anything we know of. In other words, God is Absolute. But, said Gandhi, to say that God is inaccessible is a contradiction, a negation of what He truly is. He solved the problem by the extremely simple, classic insight: the Absolute is attainable, is being attained, by the very law of the relative, in the very mode of being proper to the limited. Action inspired by Dharma leads to that. Gandhi will specify this action as follows: actions that lead to the service of all men, especially of the deprived, rejected, silenced, powerless and helpless sectors of the society, become historic actions that will lead one to the realization of the Supreme. Such are genuinly dharma — inspired actions. The insight of Gandhi has a profound significance. By it he revolutionized religion in India, in so far as religiosity was now attached to actions, historic actions, directly oriented to the service of man. By it, he liberated Hinduism, giving it a wider interpretation of karma, extricating it from enslaving ritualism. By the same insight, he gave India a marvellous synthesis of contemplation (recall, for instance, his use of terms like *yoga*, *dhyāna*, *nirvāna*, *sannyasa*, *samādhi*, *advaita* etc.) and action. The service of man, overlooked by the unconcerned, detached and alienated *bhāsyakāras* of early days, is now a central insight of modern Hinduism.

Satya and *anrita* are two ancient terms through which the human struggle and the quest for meaning were measured and analysed. The former implies truth, stability, permanence, veracity, etc. Its earliest antecedent is *rita* (order, regularity, truthfulness etc.). *Anrita* implies all that is opposed to *rita* or *satya* In the Vedic, Pauranic and philosophical schools, a variety of definitions, myths, descriptions, are found, which are elaborations of the theme: the struggle between truth and untruth. *Asato mā sad gamaya* — the ancient prayer of India — sums it up.

When Gandhi was confronted with racial inequality, ethnic or religious intolerance, poverty, rejection, etc., he felt challenged to respond. Three streams of world religions merged in him to become one force, one weapon or Sādhana — a way of action called *Satyāgraha*. The first stream comes from his own Hindu sources. The Gita's idea of action, selfless action, living for the welfare of all (*lokasamgraha*), the Gita's invitation to be an instrument of the Bhagavan — these were the immediate sources. The Biblical influence was the next important source. The Sermon on the Mount, and a number of other similar sayings of Jesus profoundly inspired him. A third source that not only inspired him but even gave him the nucleus of a method, is one branch of Western humanism, reflected in the writings of L. Tolstoy, J. Ruskin, H. Thoreau. A protest against a consumeristic,

exploitative anti-human value system, dominates the thinking of this school. Civil disobedience as a programme of action emerged in this context.

Gandhi's Satyagraha was born in this rich religio-humanistic background. To fight evil, good, not evil, is the right force. To fight forces of untruth, truth is the best weapon. To fight injustice and hatred, justice and love are the best course for man. For both the oppressor and the oppressed, are divine Gandhiji made his first experimental use of his new technique, his new method of action, in South Africa. Racial discrimination had vitiated the human culture in South Africa. Gandhi fashioned a strategy to fight this evil. He decided that love and truth should merge to become a force, and this force should conquer and demolish evil in men and society. He wanted a name for this new movement. His nephew suggested 'sadâgraha' — holding on to the principle of *Sat* — as opposed to *asat* (evil, unreality) Gandhi was fascinated by it, adopted it and even modified it to become *satyāgraha* — holding on to truth, grasp of truth, reliance on truth, firm commitment to truth Therefore *satyāgraha* is for Gandhi that method of action by which the force and power of truth are discovered and released, so that social transformation takes place, history is made rich, a culture is elevated, and in the process, the ultimate truth of God is reached

The unique experiment proved its effectiveness first in South Africa. Indian leaders were in touch with the events in South Africa On his return to India, Gandhi was requested to lead India through her struggles. In three phases he demonstrated to the world the power of satyagraha. The first phase was the civil disobedience campaign against the notorious Rowlat Bill, the second was the non-cooperation movement on the Khilafat issue, and the third the swaraj movement. There were other issues for which Gandhi launched satyagraha: the compaigns at Rajkot, Bardoli, Champaran, Vaikom, etc.

The following features of Satyagraha may be recalled: Truth is the well-spring of Satyagraha. Since for Gandhi Truth is God, discovering and recognizing the innate divinity in everyone, in everything, by means of concrete actions, was the way of reaching God. This is the foundation for the equality of all men and women. Based on this he organized his campaigns. Economic, ethnic, religious, cultural and other forms of inequality were unacceptable. As a consequence of this vision Gandhi displayed an altogether new and unique feature in his campaigns: an active, effective, genuine love and respect for, and relationship with, his opponents. There is no "enemy" in

Gandhian terminology. Truth had shown him this. If there is no "enemy" for a satyagrahi, there cannot be hatred or hostility towards your opponent even when the opponent contrives against you, persecutes you and plans your downfall or retreat. Hence satyagraha is not a *warfare* but a *service*, a commitment to truth, to justice and values that are intimately linked with the freedom and fullness of a people. Still less is satyagraha a well planned strategy to obtain an end. In satyagraha both the end and the means should be sacred and honourable. Gandhi said: "My path is clear....I have no secret methods. I know no diplomacy save that of truth. I have no weapon but non-violence".[1]

This truthfulness dominated every aspect of his life. His early confessions of misdeeds, his open acknowledgements of mistakes and errors of judgement in the course of his campaigns, his acknowledgement of personal limitations, his fearless denunciation of powers and persons responsible for oppression, all were the outcome of that basic truthfulness. Hence he always detested mixed motives in satyagraha: political gain, personal objectives, religious self-interest, were all repugnant to the idea of satyagraha. Therefore Gandhi insisted upon unadulterated purity in all endeavours. He portrays the demeanour of a satyagrahi as follows: "Truth and ahimsa should shine through his speech. All his actions must be transparent through and through. Diplomacy and intrigue can have no place in his armour. . .mixing up motives is damaging in any species of satyagraha".[2] "I recognize my error"[3] is a recurrent expression in Gandhi's commitment to truth. This is a trait rarely associated with leaders, religious or secular, high or low. What one is familiar with is justification of one's errors, diplomacy to cover up erroneous judgment, ill-conceived plans and strategies leading to unwelcome consequences. Gandhi saw that a religious satyagraha is a process of self purification, a spiritual exercise.[4] Consequently satyagraha enables one to have genuine feelings and brotherly relationships with the opponent or the oppressor. The objective of satyagraha is the emergence of truth. Personal and selfish interests warp the minds, distort values and issues, and prevent the realization of truth. This may be present in the satyagrahi as well as among the opponent, in varying degrees. The aim of satyagraha is to liberate all. He has to help the opponent free himself of the entanglement because of which one is unable to deal with other human

1. M. K. Gandhi, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1942, p. 38
2. M. K. Gandhi, *The Indian States' Problem*, Navajivan, Ahmedabad, 1941, p. 529.
3. *ibid.* p. 303.
4. *ibid.* p. 530.

beings on a footing of equality, but sees them only as instruments to be used, as useful things to be exploited, as helpful resources to be taken advantage of. This is the degradation the opponent is come to, and his victim is also suffering from these evil dispositions and designs.

The process of liberation involves suffering. To extricate an entangled object or person entails suffering. But the satyagrahi, desirous of removing the evil, and of liberating the person (the opponent), *volunteers to take upon himself the sufferings the opponent should himself have gone through.* Thus truth drives a selfless satyagrahi to undertake *voluntary suffering* Gandhiji says that the truest test of a satyagrahi is such voluntary suffering.

How this works is also visualized by Gandhi. When the opponent sees that his victim is voluntarily taking upon himself the pain and hardships he should have endured, his heart is touched, his convictions challenged, and his self-protecting fortifications crumble. The outer hard cover of wickedness in his personality is shattered; an appeal is made to the true self in him, the noblest in the person, and the best human response is evoked For the truest test of the spirituality of satyagraha is the idea of voluntary self-suffering, as the way of purification. This ennobles all, disarms the opponent, does not humiliate *him, but enriches him by opening the way to the truth and value that* is concealed within him but blocked by self interests. Hence it is liberative action. Satyagraha thus enables one to liberate the satyagrahi as well as the withholder of the rights, the "opponent". Thus "genuine satyagraha is a spiritual exercise. As such it can only evoke the best, not the worst, in man".[5]

This process of dislodging the untruth in the complex of value systems and selfish-interests, and bringing about a change in the mentality, in the heart, of the opponent, by means of such truth-affirmation as leads to voluntary self-suffering rather than inflicting suffering on others, is called *conversion*. Gandhi insists that this change of heart or conversion, is the appropriate and religious method to tackle any evil that blocks the heart of man. Only with a change of heart will any permanent and substantial change take place in the evil social system. Gandhiji grew in his conviction of the invincibility of non-violence and satyagraha from the several experiences of his life. Therefore he says that "it is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart".[6] His disciple, M. D. Desai said. "The essence of the new technique lies in faith in the convertibility of the opponent by means of purest non-violence".[7]

5. *ibid*. p. 530.
6. *ibid*. p. 44.
7. *ibid*. p. 594.

Now we come to a most remarkable dimension of non-violence and satyagraha. Gandhi always enjoined on his satyagrahis not to rely upon external help for the success of the cause but on the inner strength. He demands an unconquerable faith in the truth of the cause one advocates and in the purity of motives of the satyagrahi. He discloses that the foundation of all the faith, confidence and fearlessness in his campaigns (*thus distinguishing his method from all other methods or strategies*), is his reliance on God. Gandhiji always felt that his movement towards God was a God-impelled search for God. God is the doer. He initiates the process by disclosing his designs to the willing instrument/collaborator. The instrument perceives God's presence and detects his message, through what Gandhi called the "small inner voice". He himself was always faithful to that voice. He believed it was from God. He cultivated a reverence for it, and a faithfulness to it. It gave him assurance and fearlessness. It was God who intervened in human affairs, to direct and to guide man in his actions. Satyagraha is always a service of that God. And since its inspiration is from God, the successful outcome is assured. Hence the ultimate reliance of a satyagrahi is on God. Says Gandhi: "...a satyagrahi relies solely on God who is the help of the helpless and not on numbers. A satyagrahi always says to himself, He in whose name satyagraha was launched, will also see it through."[8]

This absolute reliance on God becomes a source of strength for the satyagrahi in the midst of undefinable pressures, desertions by companions, prolongations of the struggle, even temporary withdrawals of the action programme. There is no regret, calculation, or search for alternative sources of support. "Why should they calculate? When once all is surrendered to God it is He who takes the responsibility and he who casts his care becomes carefree"[9] said M. D. Desai, commenting upon the role of his master. Testifying to his own experience, Gandhi says, "It has been my unvarying experience that God never tries a satyagrahi beyond his capacity. Somehow strength comes to us when we need it most if we utterly rely on Him. But this needs intense preparation and self-discipline through ceaseless labour of love".[10] When Gandhi was impelled to start for a journey to Rajkot to undertake a satyagraha with fast, he felt as though he obeyed an inner divine command. Kasturba was perturbed on hearing about the decision and at her not being consulted. Gandhi re-assured her explaining, "I am going there as God is taking me there...You are

7. *ibid*. p. 594.
8. *ibid*. p. 524.
9. *ibid*. p. 487.
10. *ibid*. p. 502.

worrying for nothing. You ought to rejoice that God has sent me an opportunity to do His will. How could I consult you or anybody else before undertaking the fast when I myself was not aware that it was coming? God gave the signal and what else could I do than obey?"[11]

Satyagraha and non-violence

Violence is a comprehensive term in Gandhian literature. Under it comes every form of anti-human values. Corruption, oppression, falsehood, hypocracy, deceit and the like fall under the category of violence. Gandhi's reading of the whole situation in India, as well as in South Africa, was from this perspective. Man's greed assuming organised form and structure, and becoming a value system in the field of economics, politics, commerce and social relations, is the basic cause of violence. The answer to violence is not violence, Gandhiji saw, but non-violence.

Non-violence is *ahimsā*: non-injury, non-killing The Indian and the English rendering of this term is through a negative. But the content of this negative term is positive· love. It is an expression of universal love for everyone, for everything. There is a practical philosophy of advaita as well as Jain, Buddhist and Christian values behind this concept of universal love. "Never in this world does hatred cease by hatred — hatred ceases by love", said the Buddha "hence let a man overcome anger by kindness, evil by good".[12] Jainism advocates ahimsa. Indeed its very religion is ahimsa. The Mahabharata echoes and confirms this ideal when it says *ahimsā paramo dharmah*. "Man as animal is violent" said Gandhi "but as spirit, is non-violent".[13] Violence thus pertains to the realm of the dark forces in man. Its contrary principle is regard for all, recognition of all, love for all. This emanates from the spirit of man. The Spirit in man. Being a combination of truth and love, this benevolence towards all becomes a force. Gandhi called it Truth-force. It is a moral spiritual force or power. Gandhi said that "ahimsa is a solvent strong enough to melt the stoniest heart".[14] For Nehru, "it is the spirit of man facing material might".[15]

The demands of the Buddha expressed through the eight-fold norms of rectitude are operative here too: namely, right thought, right work, etc. Gandhi insists equally upon these principles. Hence he

11. *ibid.* p. 510.
12. Indira ROTHERMUND, *The Philosophy of Restraint*, Popular Prakashan, 1963, p. 57.
13. *Harijan*, Aug. 11, 1940.
14. GANDHI, *Indian States' Problem*, p. 44.
15. ROTHERMUND, *op. cit.* p. 120.

says that non-violence has to be observed in thought, word and deed. There should not be any ill-will towards the opponent, any feelings of hostility in the heart. Love prompts the satyagrahi's actions. The Sermon on the Mount can be recognised.[16]

Non-violence has profound implications for democracy, justice and peace. Violence as explained above is complex and operates in manifold ways in every field of human activity. All forms of inequalities result from violence. Non-violence or love for all will imply that you demolish the walls of separation, eliminate the sources of exploitation and injustice, and restore an order of human living where equality guides economics, politics, social relationships, even religious affiliations. Gandhi says that "...democracy, so long as it is sustained by violence, cannot provide for or protest the weak. My notion of democracy is that under it the weakest should have the same opportunity as the strongest That can never happen except through non-violence".[17] This implies that non-violence is not just a slogan but a way of life, affecting every aspect of our individual and social life.

Faith in man is the basis of non-violence It demands that you trust those who are regarded as untrustworthy. Endless patience is part of that trust. M. D. Desai says that "the essence of the new technique lies in the convertibility of the opponent by means of purest non-violence".[18]

Fast and Satyagraha

The objective of satyagraha is liberation in time and history, however partial. Truth and love are its impelling forces. Ahimsa implies deep love for and solidarity with all, including the self. It is in this context of a passionate pursuit of life in its fullness that we have to consider an essential aspect of satyagraha: fasting.

The sources of India's religio-cultural traditions are replete with mythological and historical descriptions of the role of fast. Dhruva famishingly waiting upon the Lord, and Savitri's life of austerities and days of fast prior to her decision to meet Death (Yama) face to face, are among the well-known stories. In the collective memory of the people these are stories of rishis and sages undertaking severe austerities, including fasts, in order to obtain certain goals like the destruction of a demon or the protection of a city and its people.

Gandhi recalls how his early childhood was full of these memories. He says he imbibed them with his mother's milk. "My mother fasted

16. GANDHI, *Non-Violence in Peace and War*, p. 240.
17. *ibid.* p. 369.
18. GANDHI, *Indian States' Problem*, p. 594.

if some one was ill in the family. She fasted if she was in pain, she fasted in season and out of season. How can I her son do otherwise ?"[19]

Fasting is a kind of prayer. Gandhi says, "Indeed fasting becomes *the purest and highest form of prayer*".[20] Fasting aims at control of *the self, so that one's conscience is made sensitive to the voice of* God: "*Fasting is a nourishment for* the soul, far more indispensable than food for the physical body".[21] M. D. Desai, Gandhiji's loyal commentator, says that fast is "a divine sacrificial fire which kindles divine sparks in us and burns up the impurities that are not of God".[22]

On critical occasions Gandhi undertook satyagraha with fast It was his contention that a satyagrahi *risks* all and offers himself as a willing and pure sacrifice.[23] Therefore a fast was not only a purificatory act but a sacrifice, sometimes even a supreme sacrifice. "For a satyagrahi there can be only one goal, viz., to lay down his life performing his duty whatever it may be. It is the highest he can attain".[24]

Was it suicide ? was it a strategy ? was fast unto death, especially the fast he undertook for Hindu-Muslim unity before his death, a coercion ? Gandhi repeatedly declared that it was not a coercion A fast undertaken for a great cause even if it leads to one's death, is for him a sacrifice, part of the vow of voluntary suffering in order that the truth in the opponent may be released. It is an other-oriented action. Both Gandhi and his disciple-commentator Mahadeva Desai, often referred to Jesus' handing Himself over into the hands of his killers, not a suicide but a supreme sacrifice for a sacred cause.

According to his belief in the "small inner voice", Gandhi always considered a decision to fast as a God-inspired act. Thus to vindicate the honour of the Harijans on the issue of separate electorates. Gandhi undertook a fast, saying "I will resist it with my life", and he felt it was God who led him to this. When he set out on his Rajkot fast he thought it was not at all his decision, but that God bade him do it. Before the last fast he said that something from within said "The final sacrifice must be offered".

For years to come scholars in religion, sociology, politics, humanism, and other fields, will be engaged in pondering over the significance of the Gandhian experiment and draw out its implications for

---

19. *ibid.* p. 488.
20. *ibid.* p. 483.
21. *ibid.* p. 506.
22. *ibid.* p. 474.
23. *ibid.* p. 585.
24. *ibid.* p. 528.

history. Both during his lifetime and still more after his death, organised religions showed a pitiable inability to open themselves up to these implications. None can deny the fact that God spoke and acted through this prophet of our times. What He spoke and the significance of what He did through this man, have a bearing on all religions, probably adding new dimensions to the heritage they are eager to preserve. These new dimensions may puzzle some, scare away others, or confirm many in their earlier convictions and traditions. The new language and methodology of the Vatican II imposes on us the task of discerning what God speaks to us through the modern prophets.

What strikes me most is the contribution Gandhi has made through satyagraha and fast to the humanistic and cultural heritage of history. One can say he has inspired humanity and purified it, drawing it away from anti-human practices, values and structures, towards an authentic concept of man, of society, and of life in general. By opposing the selfish interests vested in the modern industrial and commercial culture, Gandhi persuades us to evolve a value system in which the other is more important than the self. If applied to societal transactions, this can revolutionise human living. The violence and exploitation, whether crude or subtle, that degrade human culture today, could be eradicated and culture saved and given a new direction, if his insight is made operational.

By inventing a method of action, non-violent satyagraha, and by expounding the ideological constituents of that concept, Gandhi has done a service to all religions — that of bringing God near and making his message and love operational and imbedded in human life. Religious ritualism receives a healthy corrective. Truth is the corner-stone of life, and it is through truth, by its acceptance and by doing the truth, that God is becoming accessible to men and women. Philosophy, practical life and religion become one in such a synthesis. Satyagraha is that synthesis. Ahimsa and fasting are part of that process.

Love for the other, to the extent of living, serving and even dying for others, flows from the core insight of Gandhi: the solidarity of humanity is based on the innate divinity of man. This imposes norms of conduct and judgment in social relations. Satyagraha in this context conveys to all a firm belief in the power of truth and of love.

Truth and love, the two terms that summarise God's disclosure of Himself and His plan for humanity, the foundational Christian experience, did not develop into a social system and ideology, an economic policy, a social strategy. An indiscriminate association

with political power all through Christian history prevented the growth of what could have been a Christian political theology. The Christian experience of the love of the Father for all humanity, should have inspired and generated an economic system of values wherein the Father's love for all would be operational in the daily transactions of every citizen. But this did not materialize. This may be because of two factors: alignment with the political powers and philosophical and theological abstraction Similarly, there is no Christian sociology In the absence of effective leadership on the part of the proponents of the Gospel, violence and bloodshed were the only methods available to the people that became conscious of the oppression in their lives. Every form of monstrosity, like feudalism, slave trade, colonialism and subjugation of peoples and cultures along with wholesale plunder of their treasures, the evil aspects of industrialisation, etc. were experienced in history. It was partly to respond to some of these evils that Gandhi evolved a methodology of action which now proves to be probably the most priceless contribution of India to human culture and history, one that goes beyond Asoka's statesmanship. Erikson considered Gandhi "a culturally influential saint and a potential creator of a new secular religion". The expression is justified in many ways.

In the Bhagavadgita, Krishna asks Arjuna to be his partner and associate. The lokasamgraha (welfare of all) through a restoration of dharma is the objective of the avatara. Through such activity the world-process goes on uninterruptedly. We have here an element of a theology of history. The meaning of actions that give direction to history, and draw it closer to its goal, is an essential ingredient of that theology. Gandhi's method of commitment acquires a unique value from this point of view. Reading the signs of the times has to be followed by *decisive actions* that are the appropriate response to them. Truth and non-violence (love) are held up as the norm for such reflection and action. This is a departure from the traditional understanding of the revolutionary movements. There is no doubt that the power to enrich and elevate human culture to a higher stage of growth depends on our ability to continue along this path of action.

Dossier

I. The Kerala Fisherfolk Struggle

THIS presentation of the fishermen's struggle and its deeply human and liberating experience is made against the background of a national search at the political level. We in India are faced with a pervasive disenchantment with the political party system. Non-party political processes and the role of action groups are discussed all over the country. The *Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation* (KSMTF, meaning "Kerala Independent Fishermen's Federation") is a concrete example of a non-party political organism, providing an object lesson in such a process. The KSMTF is remarkable in that it has an enlightened and united lay leadership, supported by a small group of clergy and nuns. Hence our reflection here includes vital issues regarding political alternatives for our nation. For Christians, issues touching their faith and religion are also at stake, e g , how far should the clergy be involved in the people's struggles, what is the meaning of ministry, of religious commitment, of obedience, secular spirituality, and so on.

1. *The Kerala Fisherfolk*

Scattered along the 580 km coast of Kerala there live 10 lakhs of fishermen and women. Of this about 1·5 to 2 lakhs are active fishermen, eking out their meagre livelihood from the rough seas. More than half the fisherfolk are Roman Catholics. The history of these fisherfolk is a sad tale of faith and superstition, exploitation and apathy. As Fr Dominic George puts it, "This is the poorest, most illiterate, poorly housed and marginalised community of Kerala".[1] In the lives of the Catholic fisherfolk the Church has had a pivotal role; in fact most of them are exclusively guided by the Church, which means in practice the parish priest, in everything that pertains to their life.

But the response of the Catholic Church to their economic plight has been to do cosmetic welfare work. The Church has traditionally collected five per cent of their income, but has only succeeded in putting up large churches (the construction of which never seems to end), as well as schools where the rate of attendance, let alone the results, is pathetically low, and in fighting communal battles and organising a whole lot of religious extravaganzas.

Into this situation of ignorance, exploitation and apathy there came in the seventies a group of radical Christian priests and nuns. There followed a well co-ordinated mass awareness programme and a number of struggles for basic human rights. Later, the KSMTF was formed.

1. Fr Dominic George, S.J., in a report published by the Socio-Religious Centre, Calicut.

The traditional fishermen use country boats (*cattamarams*) and nets or hooks. The new boat owners use mechanised boats/trawlers and purse seine nets. A confrontation took place because of two immediate experiences. Since 1953, when bottom trawling was brought into Kerala by the Indo-Norwegian project, the trawlers increasingly encroached upon the territory of traditional fishermen, tearing their nets and often destroying them. This infuriated the traditional fisherfolk and stray clashes occurred on the seas. Further, over the years the traditional fishermen noticed a sharp decline in their catch, which was later confirmed by hard scientific data. The traditional fishermen were quick to link the depletion of fish resources with the onslaught of the trawlers. (Ironically enough, Norway had partially banned trawling as early as 1936. But the "great benefactors" never told the Indians that their own country had not allowed more than half a dozen trawlers !). The traditional fishermen with their innate intelligence realised the dangers of overfishing and the consequent damage to ecology caused by the trawlers.

What do the trawlers do ? The trawlers/mechanised boats drag bell shaped nets through the sea at varying depths. In cases of bottom trawling, the sea bed is ploughed through to catch the prawns and similar species. As a result a vast amount of young fish, sea eggs and vegetation are destroyed. As any fisherman will tell you, for every fish caught, at least eight small ones are thrown away. In a study by PUCL it was calculated that about 1500 tons of potential fish are destroyed every day.[2] There are no exact figures about the number of mechanised boats or trawlers. Around 3000 are licensed and owned by a handful of people. The monsoon season usually brings along a spate of unlicensed boats in search of the abundant prawns.

The 1980 marine act specified that inshore sea waters upto 10 km should be exclusively reserved for traditional fishermen. In Kerala this was never enforced, the apparent excuse being that the government did not have enough police force. Hence we witnessed an increasing encroachment of mechanised boats and trawlers into the area of traditional fishermen depriving them of their livelihood.

Thus the problem involved three groups: on the one side, 1·5 lakhs of traditional fishermen, most of whom own neither a craft nor a net (nets alone cost thousands), demanded at least a partial ban on trawlers during the June-August months, when spawning occurs. They had also sixteen other demands. On the other side, there was a well-knit group of boat owners and their workers (all of whom are not necessarily from the fishermen's community), with considerable political and economic clout. The government seemed to be fully on their side. Then there was the third group, the experts, who are pathetically divided, even after 30 years of research, about the data and issues relevant to the struggle. Whatever be their assessments, the Norwegian, Indonesian and Filipino experiences support a partial, if not a total,

---

2. *Kerala matsya bandhana rangathu nilanilkunna pauravakasa pramanangal*, A preliminary report by the Joint Secretary, Mr K. M. THOMAS, published by G. Kumarapillai, for PUCL, Tiruvalla, July 1984, p. 9.

ban on trawling. In this whole affair, the group that suffered most, obviously, was that of the traditional fishermen, with no organisation, no political or economic power, and no one to plead for them. It is no wonder that these people attribute the major responsibility for their impoverishment to the boat owners.

How scientific is their claim ? FAO has put forward three criteria to establish overfishing: (i) a decline in total catch; (ii) a decline in catch per unit effort; and (iii) a decline in the size of the species caught. According to available statistics marine fish production in Kerala over the last fifteen years shows a declining trend.[3]

Period	*Average annual fish landing in tons*
1971-75	4,06,000
1976-80	3,31,000
1981-82	2,99,000

The boat owners right by point out that 70-85% of the year's catch of prawns occurs in the June-August months. Hence a ban at that time could be a big loss. But the other side of the story is that the prawns' catch has also shown a sharp decline·

Year	*Total Catch*	*Catch per unit effort*
1973	45,477 tons	82 kg. per hour
1979	14,582 "	20 " " "

The decline is 9% per annum[4]

As we see from the above statistics two of the criteria for overfishing are fully verified. As regards the third criterion, hard scientific data are difficult to come by. Still the fishermen and trade sources say that over the years there has been a shift to smaller varieties of fish for export. The PUCL after studying the available data comes to the following conclusions:

(i) The government has failed to prevent the over-exploitation of marine resources. The danger of water pollution and ecological imbalance is ignored by the government, under pressure from the boat owners' lobby.

(ii) The traditional fishermen have been denied the right to their livelihood. Their basic human rights are ignored. Any attempt they make to organise themselves is viewed with hostility.

(iii) The government and the vested interest have aligned themselves to deny even the just protests by the fishermen.[5]

2. *Story of the Struggle*

The seventies saw the beginning of mass mobilisation among the fishermen, especially the Roman Catholic, initiated by a group of radical

3. A. V. VIJAYAN, *The Fishermen's Struggle in Kerala*, a report published by Fr Tom Kochery, National Fishermen's Forum.
4. John KURIAN, *Trawling and Bans: Economics and Politics*, published by Fr Tom Kochery, National Fishermen's Forum.
5. The PUCL report (note 2), p. 26.

priests and nuns. The movement grew through small struggles and culminated in the 1981 fight of twenty-five days, historic because for the first time the Kerala fishermen got together to claim their basic rights. The immediate provocation for the fight was the left Democratic Front (LDF)'s hasty relaxation of a ban on mechanised trawling in the Neendakara-Quilon areas during the months of June-August. The official explanation given was that the *Karikkadi* variety of prawns could be caught only during that season. But the people never bought that explanation. They believed that one of the ministers of the LDF who owned a fleet of mechanised boats, found it too great a loss to abstain from the seas for three months. The struggle included road blocks, air-port blocks, fasts by leaders including some priests, *dharnas* and demonstrations. The LDF ministry agreed to appoint a commission of 13 led by a top bureaucrat, Babu Paul. The commission submitted its report on 21.7.1982 There was a unanimous agreement on twelve recommendations, but the suggestion to ban trawling was rejected by a majority of two.

A year passed The government did nothing even about the unanimous recommendations By this time the ministry had changed The Federation also entered a stage of subdued existence But by early 1983, the Federation unanimously decided to start a second major fight. There were detailed discussions on whether to go into it alone or with other trade unions. Finally it decided to fight alone. But immediately after the decision, the then president of the Federation sent a personal circular withdrawing the planned struggle. This led to a crisis in the Federation, and an eventual rift· the *All Kerala Swatantra Matsya Thozhilali Federation*, led by Fr Parisavilla, which had the backing of bishops, and the KSMTF which had the larger following and veteran leaders like Fr Kochery. These chose Fr Joe Kaleeckal as their president.

The KSMTF began the fight as planned. In April 1984 it presented a seventeen point charter of demands, including the crucial one of a ban on trawlers during the months of June-August, and the implementation of the recommendations of the Babu Paul commission, which included welfare measures like grants for students, old age pension, drinking water facilities, and other demands like a total ban on night trawling, restoration of democratic election system in the executive body of the government-sponsored fishery village societies. A memorandum signed by 10,000 people was submitted to the Chief Minister. After this, the agitation was intensified with *jathas*, demonstrations, mass *dharnas*, picketing, hunger strike, street corner and public meetings, rail and road blocks, and so on. In Calicut, Ernakulam, Shertallai, Mavelikara, Quilon and Trivandrum the Federation workers, some 39 in all, went on a hunger strike. In Calicut Sr Alice's and Mr Velayudhan's fast went on for 15 days. In Trivandrum Sr Philomine Marie fasted for 23 days, while other leaders' fasts went on, ranging from 4 days to 12 days each. One of the key points of the struggle was a march to the Secretariate on June 18th. Though the government did all in its power to abort the *jatha*, with intimidation, parade of police force, and the blockade of vehicles, still about 2500 people

gathered in front of the Secretariate on June 18th. That day showed the public for the umpteenth time how disciplined this movement of the fisherfolk was. In spite of heavy provocation, the demonstration remained calm and determined. A thousand people walked from Quilon to Trivandrum, a 60 km. road to join the march, an event deeply symbolic for the fisherfolk.

At the initial stages the government ignored the struggle. Later it attributed false motives to the leadership But finally it gave in to some of the welfare demands. A group of seven bishops met the Chief Minister. Two other conciliatory meetings were held, but to no avail. The union stuck to its major demand for the ban on trawlers during the June-August months.

By the 22nd of June the struggle, though still keeping a high morale, was approaching a crisis point. In the Malabar region the ending of Sr Alice's fast brought the spirits down. Moreover, the Ramzan month made it physically and emotionally difficult for the Muslim members to continue the struggle. In Trivandrum Sr Philomine's fast caused anxiety. Should something tragic happen to her, the people's reaction might get out of control. Nobody wanted to see any sort of violence erupt. That would be harmful to the people's cause. Thus the deteriorating condition of Sr Philomine, the paucity of funds, and the fatigue of fishermen, were strong enough reasons for a suspension of the struggle for the time being. It is important to note that the withdrawal of the struggle on June 22 did not follow any agreement. The Federation made it clear that they only wanted a respite in order to prepare for a new phase.

3. *Response*

The response of the media was surprisingly wide, and helpful in maintaining the tempo of the struggle. But, understandably, the emphasis was not on the fishermen's cause but on the clergy and the consequent problems within the Catholic Church. The fast of Srs Alice and Philomine probably got the maximum publicity. The controversial interview Sr Alice gave to the *Indian Express* and the later article by V. V. John led to a national debate, echoes of which are still heard in letters to the Editor and other fora. The fact that all the major dailies of Kerala had editorials and regular reports made a big difference to the movement. The national press too did a positive coverage, notably *The Indian Express*, *India Today*, *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, *The Hindu*, *Business India*, and other journals

The response of the hierarchy was confusing. At the personal level the bishops of Verapoly and Tellicherry took an interest in the movement. A group of seven bishops met the Chief Minister to plead for the fisherfolk. But the official KCBC, unfortunately, took an "obedience" approach to the whole issue. There was a paradox, too, in their statements. On June 7th they made a statement to the effect that the government had not kept any of its promises to the fishermen. But eleven days later they seemed to have such faith in the government's promises that they made a public appeal to stop the agitation. Its

timing was unfortunate: it came on the eve of the march to the Secretariate. No wonder, then, that the bishops' statement was well used by the government to confuse the public. The bishops of Quilon and Trivandrum have communicated to their diocese the KCBC decision which prohibits the clergy and religious from participating in any agitation without the prior permission of the Bishop. (Curiously the decision says that women religious need to take the bishop's permission, while men religious must get it also from their superiors !)

As we look at history we notice that even after the 1981 struggle the bishops came down strongly on the clergy involved. The important leaders like Frs Tom Kochery, Jose Kaleeckal, Louis Panikulangara, were all transferred or admonished. One wonders whether in the response of the hierarchy, an adequate distinction is made between what are trade union issues and what is the church's authority in matters of morals and faith.

Despite the fact that there are many leaders from the diocesan clergy, a large number of priests especially from the coastal area is apathetic or even antagonistic to the movement. The response seems to be religious and emotional, but perhaps at a deeper level it could also be due to the class structure of the community.

The response of the general public, excepting the fisherfolk, was one of surprise. They had been victims of various myths, that the fisherfolk are not thrifty, that they are drunkards, and so on. Probably for the first time it was brought home to them that the fisherfolk are an exploited community and that they can be disciplined, determined and courageous. The solidarity expressed by a group of famous writers and literary figures was of tremendous significance. Environmental and ecology groups also came out in support of the fisherfolk's demands.

To those who were in its front line, the fisherfolk's struggle was a deeply human and liberating experience. It was an experience with definite spiritual, economic and political overtones. Some thirty of the frontline, workers who came together at Charalkunnu, soon after the events, shared what could be considered a very precious moment in the history of the liberation movement of these people. Let us hear some of their reflections.

A young woman from the fisher community who had joined the hunger strike said, "Hunger was never a stranger to my life. But in the light of the extreme poverty of my people my fasting seemed so trivial.... As I lay fasting, my mother would come and stand near me, weeping and begging me to go back....while Sr Philomine's mother would sit quietly near her. While my own half-starved mother would persuade me to stop, Sr Philomine's mother, like the mother of Jesus, would give her daughter support....This touched me deeply and it gave me courage. I said to myself, 'In this movement I have a thousand mothers and fathers'....."[7]

6. This and the following quotations are from Fr Samuel Rayan's personal notes, freely translated.

One of the young workers who fasted for 12 days shared the following. On the sixth day of his fast his young wife came with their only child and pressed him to return home. He said, "I am doing this for thousands of children like ours and women like you. Therefore there is no question of stopping....The mother of Jeuss did not ask Jesus to throw away the cross...I am happy even if this will mean my death..."

Fr Aloysius Fernandes, a young diocesan priest from Quilon had taken his Bible at hand. He shared, "As I laid fasting I used to open the Bible at random. .I always got the book of Job. And whatever I read had a new light, a new warmth. The book of Job became so meaningful to me...it was in that experience that I discovered the meaning of the Eucharist, that it is essentially the gift of self to others... Besides this I had two experiences: a new esteem and reverence for the struggling people, and a sense of inseparable unity and solidarity with them. Once a seventy year old fisherwoman came to me with her empty basket and smelling hands, took both my hands in hers and with tears in her eyes said, 'Father, you are doing this for our children', and both of us wept."

4. *Results*

It is undeniable that the long struggle by the fisherfolk has borne fruits The nation for once woke up to the sorry plight of the fisherfolk. The cries of the fisherfolk reached the sympathetic ears of many leaders and groups. The struggle has given an impetus to a serious scientific study about the issues involved. To the fisherfolk themselves the struggle has been uniquely educative. As one of them put it, "We realize that people can be organized only through struggles." A solid leadership has emerged from among the fisherfolk. Their commitment and enlightenment will outweigh the leadership of the clergy. And finally one cannot deny that some of the demands of the struggle have been met. For instance, lump sum grants for students, welfare fund for old age pension, and others. As for the Catholic Church, new stirrings have emerged which are bound to have repercussions on the very self-image of the Church in Kerala.

M. K. GEORGE, S.J.

*M. K. GEORGE is a student of theology in Vidyajyoti and was in Kerala, his own Jesuit Province, during the May-June events this year.

II. Document regarding the Kerala Catholic Bishops Conference (KCBC)

No. 690/84/186, 23.7 1984 Trivandrum Bishop's House

Decision of the KCBC on the Involvement of Priests and Religious in Agitations.

To,

The Priests and Religious men and women in the Diocese.
Rt Rev. Msgrs/Very/Rev. and Dear Fathers, Brothers, Sisters,

In the KCBC meeting held on 14th July 1984 the following decisions were taken·

. . .With regard to the *involvement of Priests and Religious in agitations* and public demonstrations the Bishops, after studying the recent declarations of the Holy Father on this matter and sufficient discussions, arrived at the following decisions:

1. Under no circumstances 'fast unto death' and the use of violence as well as participation in demonstrations or protests involving use of such means are allowed.

2. Participation of women Religious in any public demonstration or protest should be with previous consent of the local Bishop.

3. Participation of men Religious in any public demonstration or protest should be with the previous consent of their major Superior and of the local Bishop

4. Participation of Diocesan Priests in any public demonstration or protest should be with the previous consent of the local bishop.

These decisions are to be communicated to the persons and bodies concerned.

The above decisions should be observed by all in our diocese.

Yours sincerely,
Sd/ A. B. Jacob,
Bishop of Trivandrum

Vellayambalam, 695003.

III. A Response to the Kerala Fishermen's Struggle

The KSMTF began the struggle for the basic rights of the fishermen on the 2nd of May 1984. It picked up momentum as the days went by, and by the 15th of May the struggle had spread to all parts of Kerala and caught the attention of the media and the population. On June 22nd the Federation suspended the struggle for the time being, because the participants, namely the fishermen, were not able to carry it on any longer.

Different Perceptions

Going through the events and reactions to them as reported in the national press and Catholic weeklies, one is baffled by the differences

in the way different people looked upon the same event. In the early days of the struggle the Karunakaran ministry ridiculed it as the misguided action of some misinformed priests and nuns. Later, when the popular support and the momentum grew, the ministry admitted that there was a powerful movement afoot and began to seek ways and means of controlling it. On the part of the general public, and much more so among the fishermen, there was great enthusiasm and a sense of hope that finally some of the grievances will be remedied and the fishermen will be able to live as human beings. On the part of the bishops of Kerala there was a long period of passivity and silence, except for two members of the hierarchy who either visited the people fasting or otherwise kept in touch. Later the Kerala Catholic Bishops' Conference came out with a statement which was disappointing to many of the participants and their well-wishers. The statement did not go into the merit of the struggle, but limited itself to disciplinary matters regarding the participation of priests and religious in public demonstrations

I personally feel that this struggle, and similar happenings elsewhere in the country or abroad, call us to a deeper faith reflection on the events. The questions that keep coming to me are Why is it that the same facts are perceived so differently by different people ? Do these events have some lesson for us, as Christians and as Indians ? What are the faith implications of what happened and of the responses of various groups ? What are some of the lessons for the movement itself and for the wider issues of justice and human rights that the fishermen's struggle offers us ? I am offering some of my reflections here with the hope others will help to carry them to greater depth, and thus help all of us to strive for the establishment of the Kingdom of God in our country, and in the world at large, through our joint effort at understanding the signs of the times and responding to them as members of the human family. Such joint search, it seems to me, will enable us to actualise in our situation the teaching of the Synod of Bishops of 1971, in their statement on *Justice in the World*: "Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel, or, in other words, of the Church's mission for the redemption of the human race and its liberation from every oppressive situation". This faith search will also help us to put into practice the call of Vatican II, especially in its document on *The Church in the Modern World*, to work with all people of good will for the betterment of human life in the world (22).

The Human Rights Issue

This struggle and its origins show us some fundamental issues that are agitating the fishermen and other people who are victims of injustice in similar situations elsewhere. The first thing that strikes us is that we deal here with a group of people whose right to livelihood is threatened by the encroachment of modern technology into their fishing industry. Great damage is caused to ecology and it goes unpunished because those who pillage the sea-life in the coastal areas are people who have financial and political clout. While other countries have

consistently forbidden trawling in coastal areas to protect their ecology and sea-life, our governments allow it to continue with impunity. In the process the fishermen are deprived of their livelihood. Similar things are happening with the destruction of forests in tribal areas. In all these situations, one notices that those who move in to destroy natural resources are people who, with their money power, are able to move into other productive areas. For instance, if the sea-life is depleted through indiscriminate trawling, they can move into electronics or other industries. As for the poor fishermen, they will be left with no alternative but to eke out a living by joining the ever growing slum population of the country. Can we, as human beings and as Christians, remain silent spectators of this atrocity ?

My own sense of history tells me that when human rights are trampled upon no person can be neutral. Neutrality on such occasions is equal to participation in the crime. This is the judgement of history on the silence of many churchmen about the massacre of Jews in Nazi Germany. If we do not resist oppression at the very beginning, the oppressor will see to it that in a short time there will be no voice of dissent possible. That is to say, whenever I see the right and dignity of fellow human being trampled upon and I stay mute, a part of me dies within me. A time will come when there will be no humanity left in me. This is a frightening prospect, something each of us has to reflect deeply on, in the light of the happenings in Kerala and elsewhere.

But in a democratic situation, organization and political clout are needed for obtaining justice. This can only be achieved if more and more people recognize their responsibility for their brothers and sisters and act together for the betterment of human life (GS 31). From the changes in the response of the Kerala government it is clear that justice is never given, but has to be obtained by concerted action on the part of the people concerned: here no one can remain a neutral observer.

The Power of the Press

Another dimension worth noticing is the response of the press. Both at the national and local levels wide coverage was given to the agitation. This did help the cause very much and shows the power of the media for promoting the common good. At a later stage, some of the newspapers carried an interview with Sr Alice and tried to show that there was a polarisation within the Church. Much was made of her remark about the work of Mother Teresa, that her work does not help to change the structures of injustice but entrenches them further. Forgetting the fishermen's struggle, the media often concentrated on the contradictions in the approach of the Church personnel to human problems, and some people took this opportunity even to denigrate the efforts of all those engaged in the struggle for justice. This shows how the media can harm the movements for justice, and how prudence is important in our contacts with them.

It is important that we work with those who are enthusiastic about the rights of others and their dignity. As for those who are apathetic or lethargic towards what we stand and struggle for, it is wiser not to

antagonise them. We have limited physical and psychological energy when faced with conflict. It is wasteful to spend it on fruitless frictions. Here we can remember the saying of Christ, "Those who are not against us are for us." Therefore when loaded questions are asked by the media one needs to be prudent in expressing one's views.

Education

Another lesson that the fishermen's action has taught us is that a continued educational process is needed for a sustained struggle to last and succeed. The fight is not against this or that group, but against the blocks that are entrenched in their own vested interests and have the support of political or economic powers. Therefore, no one singly or in small groups can take on the big powers without effective organisation and without a thorough education of every member in the struggle process. This means that we need grass-root group training in decision making processes, and in analysis of the social, political and economic implications of the struggle and of the oppressive structures that cause conflict situations. Men and women have to be awakened to their actual plight. Group training and awakening has to take place before the struggle is launched, as this experience has shown us. An evaluation is also needed to see if this dimension has been overlooked in the first, or second, phases of the struggle. Corrective measures may have to be taken to ensure that the struggle continues even into a long future, if need be.

In this struggle, the fact emerged that there were many vested interests in all the communities, be they Christian, Hindu or Muslim. These interests may come in the guise of an angel of light, but they undermine the very liberating process. Therefore a serious analysis and screening of any group, left, right or centre, at the local, regional or state level, is imperative if we want to avoid being made use of by political parties of various shades. There will always be people who pretend to be well-wishers of and genuine participants in the struggle, and who, having entered it, try to divide the group.

Priests and Religious in Political Activity

I was somewhat taken aback by the silence of the bishops in the earlier part of the struggle and, later, by their statement after the KCBC meeting in the last week of July. Keeping in mind the stand taken by the Vatican II and by the Synods of bishops with regard to human rights and human dignity, I was hoping that the bishops would take a lead in this issue of justice. So their silence about these matters, both by their absence from the struggle, and by their statement, was rather dismaying. I tried to understand the reasons for this, and made many enquiries.

One of the reasons seems to lie in the fact that the bishops do not approve of the involvement of priests and religious in *any kind* of political action. Church people, priests or religious, should avoid all forms of political activity. I looked into history to see if such rule is completely warranted. From the early days of the Church one sees

Christian leaders making political options. St Ambrose confronted emperor Theodosius with the massacre of the innocent people and denied him entrance into the Church. After the official recognition of the Church, bishops had a status equal to that of senators in the Roman Empire. Pope Leo the Great personally prevented Attila the Hun from attacking Rome. Throughout the Middle Ages, Church history is replete with incidents showing the political activity of the Church.

Even in our own days, we have many examples of political action by Church leaders, with the faithful, both at home and abroad. In India there was the 1957 agitation in Kerala, and the various educational agitations later on. The anti-conversion bill and the agitation that took place at the time was, in my opinion, an example of a good political action. Outside our country we have many examples of negotiations and actions on the part of the recent popes and bishops who have tried to mitigate the evils of various fascist regimes by their interventions. The way the Church supported the Solidarity movement in Poland is another example of such action.

All the above show that political action is not opposed to the gospel life as understood by the lived experiences of the Church. And rightly so. In a religion with the Incarnation as its corner-stone, there cannot be any spirituality that is disincarnated and divested from the total human reality. While party politics may have its drawbacks, political action is unavoidable if we accept the human reality as it is. No one is exempt from this responsibility, if he or she is to serve fellow human beings.

But what left me more baffled is the absence of any reference to the various justice issues involved in the struggle of the fishermen in the statement of the KCBC referred to above. I was hoping for a reaffirmation of the basic human and Christian values from the leaders of the Church. This left me wondering if the bishops had been caught up in purely disciplinary matters, and missed the basic issues of human rights and human dignity at stake. If this is so, it is a tragedy for the Church. Are we getting obsessed by order and discipline when the very foundations of our civilisation are crumbling and the only way to preserve them is by standing up for the gospel values, the centrality of persons, and our responsibility to our neighbour?

The Future

Now I would like to look at the future: I think the experience of the fishermen's agitation may have many lessons for us. One of the lessons is the need for wide consultation and dialogue at all levels of the Church so that the past mistakes may not be repeated again in the future. One is concerned at the impression one has of a lack of dialogue between the hierarchy, the religious and the laity prior to the KCBC statement. There is also need for in-depth analysis of our social ills and of our own assumptions regarding society and its goals, so that, with clarified vision, we can work together towards a meaningful and loving human community.

Looking at the group process itself I see the need to distinguish our action from the so-called class struggle. What I mean is this: while fighting to remove oppression by all the means available to us, our action must not be based on hate. Anger can be there, but not hatred. I think that we have to evolve a method so that we do not dehumanise ourselves nor any of the participants through hate. This is a difficult area to explore, and a lot of reflection is needed and a lot of clarification, too, so that while struggling and risking our lives, we are still motivated by love, we are still motivated by the desire to help both the oppressed and the oppressor to recognise human dignity and justice.

Another area that needs exploring is the question of a theological outlook and reflection for involved Christians, for the animators, and also for the other people. It may be good if we periodically publish life stories of people who have stood up and even sacrificed their own lives for other people, people like Alfred Delp in Nazi Germany, Maxmillian Kolbe in Auschwitz, Archbishop Romero and the murdered nuns in El Salvedor and many others who have died in the process of helping people to gain their rightful place in society. Writing about them and publishing the accounts of their lives in the weeklies and newspapers will gradually help to create the awareness that to be Christian means to be concerned about the underprivileged, the marginalized, the poor, indeed all who are handicapped one way or another through societal oppression. If this dimension could be brought more and more to the foreground, then perhaps without a head-on confrontation with those who make a case against Srs Alice and Philomine Marie about their fast, we may be able to show that it has always been in the Christian tradition to risk one's life for one's fellow human beings. It started with Christ himself. Like him, Philomine Marie, Alice and others were risking their lives. They were not fasting unto death: they were fasting and struggling until a solution was found I do not think there is any real distinction between their action and that of Maxmillian Kolbe, as the intention in both case is the well-being of other people for whose sake one is willing to risk one's life. I think this dimension has to be more clearly articulated, and by giving examples from history, we may make people today aware that what matters is not what one's function in the Church is, priest, bishop, lay person, religious or whatever, but the concern for our fellow human beings that prompts us to action. In this way, instead of head-on collisions of one group against another, both the hierarchy and the people will grow in Christian sense and avoid a waste of energy in trying to butt against a wall of fixed theological prejudices. This will be strategically and educationally a sounder approach.

The experience of the struggle for the fishermen's rights gives us a strategy and a method to counter the growing sense of despair in the country with regard to corruption — political and economic. People are wondering whether they can do anything at all to curb the progressive deterioration of moral and ethical values in the country. The movement of the fishermen, free from party politics gives us, perhaps, a ray of hope and a method for tackling this situation.

There is hope for our country if people can be mobilized to fight against corruption and bribery and to recognise that by protesting in an organised way we are protecting the right of others as well as ours to a decent human existence. If a non-party based movement can be initiated, perhaps we will bring back hope to the country. This may eventually turn out to be the right forum to oppose efficaciously any form of corruption, whether it be multinational corporations dumping medicines banned in the manufacturing countries into the third world, or the oversell of unsuitable baby food, or the exploitation of workers, or the destruction of ecology, etc. By organising groups in a non party, non religious basis, we will be working towards the coming of the Kingdom, along the path marked by Vatican II when it said, in the decree on *The Church in the Modern World*, that irrespective of religious affilitations we have to work for the Kingdom with all people of good will, whether they believe in God or not. This would be an area where the theology of Vatican II is actually brought down to practice. We need to study much more as a group and to articulate more clearly what it means to work with the people of good will for the rights and dignity of every human being. Further theological reflection by Christian groups would be needed for changing the attitude of the hierarchy, the priests and the laity.

For this particular struggle we need also to reflect further on how to mobilize support financial, moral and psychological — from different strata of society. Facts have to be made more available to the public through scholarly studies, and intellectuals, social scientists, and others have to be motivated to study and write about the plight of the fishermen, economists to write about the factual data regarding the trawlers, and ecologists about the damage that is being done to the seabed and the life resources of the sea through trawling in the coastal area. Studies on the legislation of other places like the Scandinavian countries, the Philippines, Indonesia, and so on, regarding banning of trawling in the litoral areas could be made available to the public. All this would initiate a vast educational process that would help us to see that the defense of the fishermen is in effect the defense of our sea resources and a protection against the rash exploitation of nature Much encouragement and support has to be given to such studies so that we have an enlightened theoretical support and factual data to underpin the struggle taken up by the fishermen.

To some of these tasks, such as writing about the life histories of men and women who have risked their lives for others in the history of the church, seminary students could be encouraged to contribute. Along with this, a human rights based interpretation of the Christian experience down the centuries could be brought out and publicized, to show that if we are true to our heritage and beliefs we have no other option but to support the marginalized and the downtrodden. We need also conduct some studies in the development of the consciousness of human rights and human dignity in the Church, and the influence which the developments in the larger human society had on its thinking. This may show that today, with the awakening of the democratic consciousness, political action would seem to be indicated

just as in the early stages, when the kings and rulers identified themselves with the state, the Church used the temporal power to bargain with the princes — for the Church has always been politically involved ! Today, when democratic processes are at work, numbers and organisations are important, whether we enter into party politics or not. Political action, or the action of organised groups of citizens, is not only unavoidable, but the proper way of working as persons living in an era of democracy. This requires a deeper study of the history of the strategy and the involvement of the Church in shaping society in the past, so that our action today may be inspired and supported by the experience of the Church in history.

In short, what I want to say is that the experience of the fishermen's struggle in Kerala and its recent suspension constitute an important opportunity to plan for the future, not only to support these fishermen's struggle but to support human rights and human dignity at all levels of society throughout the country. This experience may also provide us with very important lessons for strategy-planning in the future, and indicate areas that need to be studied by means of collection of facts and data. It is also imperative to provide theological clarifications of the meaning and reason for involvement today. Such efforts may lead us into a more meaningful and relevant Christian existence, which in turn may help us to join the struggle for justice in an ecumenical non-denominational basis. Thus we would be working for the Kingdom which is larger than the Church, and larger than the formulations of our faith and belief.

A. PUTHUMANA, S.J.*

*Fr Abraham PUTHUMANA is a former Provincial of the Patna Jesuits and at present Rector and Professor at Vidyajyoti.

I Believe in the Holy Spirit By Yves M. J CONGAR. Translated by David Smith. Vol. I, The Holy Spirit in the 'Economy'. Revelation and Experience of the Spirit. Pp. xviii-174. £ 13 50. Vo II, 'He is Lord and Giver of Life'. Pp. x-230. £ 15.00. Vol. III, The River of the Water of Life (Rev 22:1) flows in the East and in the West. Pp xxii-274. £ 16.50. *London, Geoffrey Chapman*, 1983.

It is a pleasure to introduce our readers to the English translation of the three volumes of the theology of the Holy Spirit by one of the most eminent theologians of the century. They are a must for every theological library worth its name. The work was very favourably reviewed by Fr J. Dupuis when it first appeared in the French original (cf VIDYAJYOTI 1980, 297-8; 1982, 306-7). As these reviews are relatively recent we refer our readers to them for an analysis and evaluation of the details of this work. The English translation follows the original quite closely but very readably. The only change I have discovered is that the footnotes are, alas, printed at the end of each chapter This is not a book only for specialized theologians. It is the mature work of "a Christian who prays and a theologian who reads a great number of books and takes many notes" and who, like Tagore, would like to be a harp and "let the breath of God make the strings vibrate and sing .. a clear and tuneful song of prayer and life" (p. x). We are grateful to the publishers for making this important work promptly available to the English speaking world in a very elegant and beautiful printing. Like the original French, the English version lacks an Index.

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S.J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

Jesus and the World of Judaism By Geza VERMES. *London, SCM Press*, 1983. Pp. x-197 (Paper) £ 5 95.

The book consists of ten lectures delivered on various occasions and already published earlier, now appearing in a more or less revised form.

"Jesus the Jew" (ch 1) gives a general background to the series The lecture resumes some of the main ideas of the author's book, *Jesus the Jew* (1973) As a historian, the author tries, independently of belief, to give a true picture of the historical Jesus, thus going against the phobia of historicity shown by many NT scholars. He notes that the gospels truly reflect first century Palestine, particularly Galilee, and that as such they give clear evidence of historical reliability. In the gospels, Jesus the Galilean Jew, appears as a charismatic teacher, healer and exorcist; he also was a Galilean Hasid (devout man). "There, as I see it, lies his greatness, and also the germ of his tragedy" (p. 11) — The lecture gives but "a sketchy portrait" of Jesus, omitting his essential message; the following set of three lectures on "The Gospel of Jesus the Jew" will complement the portrait.

The first of these lectures: "A Historian's Reading of the Gospels" (ch. 2) exposes mainly the difficulties of the historian "in search for Jesus' gospel and the various ways in which his approach differs from that of the theologian" (p. 28). As historian, Dr Vermes conducts his research "within a context of Jewish history, independent of later demands of creed and tradition, Christian or Jewish" (p. 15).

The second lecture. "The Father and his Kingdom" (ch 3) aims at determining the principal features and motives of Jesus' preaching. For Jesus, God is King and Father; it is in the surrender of self to God's will that his sovereignty is realized on earth. In his preaching and instruction, and in his private prayer Jesus addresses God as his father, or as heavenly Father. His disciples and the people call him "rabbi", but he differs from the rabbis; Jesus is a charismatic teacher. "The focus of his concern was not God as such, but himself, his disciples, and the world in their relation to the Father in heaven and his kingdom" (p. 43). Jesus the teacher cannot be properly understood without taking into account the "man of God" in him. Jesus was a Galilean *Hasid* in word and deed, but by no means just one of the devout men in Galilee. 'No objective and enlightened student of the gospels can help but be struck by the incomparable superiority of Jesus" (p 152, note 70)

The third lecture: "Jesus and Christianity" (ch 4) seeks to discern "the character of Jesus the religious man, . and to contrast the essentials of his piety with the main spiritual thrust of the religion of which he has become the object" (p. 44). The gospels present him as a law-abiding person, he urges obedience to the Law, but "the chief distinction of Jesus' piety and teaching lies in his extraordinary emphasis on the real inner religious significance of the commandments" (p. 47). Jesus endeavoured to live to perfection as a son of God The fundamental principle of this endeavour was the 'imitation of God', well attested in Judaism, biblical and post-biblical, based upon Lev 19, 2 Jesus' religiousness, and piety are marked by a "tendency to give more than is asked for, to probe deeper than expected, to risk more than is safe" (p. 54).

To the picture of "the real Jesus of flesh and blood", with his genuine Jewishness, the uncompromising, single-minded love of God and his fellow-beings, convinced that by means of his example and teaching he could infect them with his own passionate sense of relation with the Father in heaven" (p. 57) is opposed the total transformation of Jesus' aims and beliefs by the early Church. This transformation is ascribed mainly to the teaching of Paul, "the true creator in the opinion of many non-Christian historians of the institutional, ecclesiastical religious body, professing a creed centred on the death and resurrection of the Messiah, known as Christianity" (p. 54). Jesus spoke

of imitation of God as "perfect filial behaviour *vis-à-vis* the Father (which) must show itself not simply in mercy and love towards others, but in mercy and love that expects no return" (p. 52). Counter to this, Paul introduced "intermediaries between the imitator and his ultimate model. First of all imitate me who am an imitator of Jesus who imitated God" (p 56). "The example of Jesus' *hasiduth*, his *theocentric* devoutness, has been overlaid by the ramifications of Paul's *christocentric* spirituality" (p 56) Paul's pessimistic view of human nature requires Christ's atoning death for salvation and Christ's glorification leading to the proclamation of his divinity. The real Jesus of flesh and blood, "the simple Jewish person of the gospels stepped back and gave way to the rich and majestic figure of the church's Christ" (p 57). — Throughout this exposition one can feel the author's sorrow and pain of one who sincerely loves and reveres the Jesus detected in the Gospels.

Dr Vermes is right in emphasizing the importance of Judaistic documents for the study of the NT. His reading of the Gospels against the Jewish background of the time brings to light many traits of the historical Jesus. There remains, however, the difficulty that he excludes the "theological" aspect of the Gospels as expression of a developing faith. Under that influence his approach to Paul looks less than fair; v g. when judging Paul's Christology to be 'christocentric' to the point of excluding all 'theocentric' consideration. His approach to development is puzzling: "the main force of the New Testament representation of the Christ event still embryonic in the synoptic gospels but fully developed in the letters of Paul .." (p 25): or again, referring to the resurrection ("transforming disaster into triumph"): in Mk a simple insinuation; the news confirmed by the trustworthy Peter, or Peter and another disciple (Lk, Mt), "subsequently (Paul) by a crowd of over five thousand " (p. 23), with the specification 'in the mid-fifties', in all this ignoring the fact that Paul's writings precede the synoptic gospels. One has to explain how the 'more developed' view (Paul) comes before the 'embryonic' synoptic tradition, and what this implies regarding the Gospels.

The following chapters are either less directly concerned with the person of Christ, or of a somewhat more technical character; only a brief reference to their contents will be given.

"Jewish Studies and New Testament Interpretation" (ch 5) begins by surveying, throughout the centuries, to what extent NT interpreters have made use of Jewish religious texts. At present it is generally admitted that no proper interpretation of the NT is possible without expertise in the Jewish background, including Mishna, Talmud, etc, which even though codified only between 200-500 AD contain many traditions traceable to the first century

"Jewish Literature and New Testament Exegesis" (ch 6) differs from the previous chapter by the attempt at finding a methodology, as the sub-title indicates, "Reflections on Methodology" The basic consideration is the fact that Jewish traditional teaching is a source common to the NT and the rabbinic writings. Hence, the Bible should be viewed not as an independent literary work but as part of the Jewish religious and cultural history, just as the Qumran scrolls, Josephus, etc The method must be strictly historical, rather than theological.

The lecture on "The Present State of the 'Son of Man' Debate" (ch. 7), examining the expression 'The Son of Man' in the OT and Jewish Aramaic texts, concludes that the expression may be understood as a 'self-reference circumlocution' for 'I'. The use of 'Son of Man' as a title cannot be substantiated.

"The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on Jewish Studies" (ch 8), after a brief survey of the discovery of the scrolls, indicates some of the main fields, wherein these documents have had an influence upon Jewish studies, v g. regarding the transmission of the text of the Bible; the place of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha in the literature of Judaism, the history and culture of the Jews in Late Antiquity; and especially the haggadic scriptural exegesis.

"The Impact of the Dead Sea Scrolls on the Study of the New Testament" (ch. 9) examines features common to both documents: the prominence given to eschatological expectation; their communities, respective claims to be the true Israel; their peculiar attitude to the Bible; their attitude towards the Temple at Jerusalem; similar organizations in both communities. Yet, "if the Qumran Scrolls are invaluable in shedding new light on early Christianity, rabbinic literature skilfully handled is still the richest source for the interpretation of the original gospel message, and the most precious aid to the quest for the historical Jesus" (p. 125).

The final chapter on "The Essenes and History" (ch. 10) maintains that it is correct to assert that "the effect of the Qumran finds is that the Jewish roots of *Essenism* are now established and its birth and development linked to some of the salient, and therefore identifiable events of the history of Israel during the last three cent uries of the Second Temple period" (p 127). The topics treated are: the history of the Essenes; historical hypotheses for identifying the Teacher of Righteousness and the Wicked Priest; the insertion of Essenism into the Judaism of the intertestamental era.

Besides the interest of the topics treated in the lectures, the book, in spite of certain reservations and differences of opinion, deserves our sincere appreciation, not least for the footnotes complementing or explaining the text, and for the numerous bibliographical references

J VOLCKAERT, S J.

Theology

The Power of the Poor in History. Selected Writings. By Gustavo GUTIERREZ, *London SCM Press*, 1983, Pp. xvi-240. £ 6.50.

The encounter with the Lord in the midst of the "condemned of the earth", "God's favorites" and "the predilects of the Kingdom" is the theme of the present book, which is also the main thrust of the theology of liberation, spearheaded by G Gutierrez The present book comes ten years after the publication of the epochmaking *Theology of Liberation* by the same author The book has an eleven page Preface by the well-known ecumenical theologian Robert McAfee Brown. Though a compilation of eight selected texts, the present book has a coherent unity. Part I deals with the biblical foundation of the theology of liberation. The struggles of the poor are shown as the privileged locus or medium through which God reveals Himself in history, through Jesus of Nazareth, "the Father's Truth". As in *Theology of Liberation*, so and still more here, God's preferential love for the poor is the key to the understanding of His intervention in history This is central to the theology of liberation, and the main purpose of this section is to elucidate this point.

Part II deals with the theological and ecclesiological developments between the first Latin American Episcopal Conference held at Medellin in 1969 and the second at Puebla in 1969. The section has three texts: the first deals with the liberation process, the second shows the liberation praxis and its relation to faith, and the third treats of the role of the poor in this process The tragic economic and political situation of the continent confronting a Church structurally and ideologically ill-equipped to cope with it, and the role of the poor of Latin America in awakening this church, form the central theme of this entire section. The theological treatment of the theme is done in great depth. It shows us how an entire Christian continent, sunk in poverty, injustice and oppression began slowly to wake up, and, passing from the phase of verbal doctrinal declarations on "social concern" to committed action came to the present situation of conflict and tension Commitment to the poor, analysis of the socio-economic structures and other forces, and the emergence of the basic Christian communities — these three factors are shown to be responsible for this awakening.

Part III makes an analysis of the two episcopal conferences, Medellin and Puebla The Preparatory Document circulated for consideration at Puebla is systematically analysed and its inadequacy exposed This is followed by reflections on the significance and the vast potentialities of the two documents Medellin and Puebla, by which the Church in Latin America committed itself to be like the God of the Bible in its preferential option for the poor Both here as well as in Part IV, which is a major theological treatment of the role of the poor in salvation history, the focus is on what the author calls "the underside of history". The last part offers some reflections on theology in general and some comments on a letter of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

The book is a valuable contribution to a Christian re-interpretation of contemporary times. A new theology of history is at work in the perspective presented here. The gospel's rigour and truthfulness, so demanding and compelling, characterize the entire approach, with its insight and forcefulness. The range of scholarship displayed is remarkable, while a passionate love for the poor dominates the entire book. Theology, and Christian life in contemporary society, are deeply challenged by it. T. K. JOHN, S.J.

See also pp. 445, 455, 481.

Cum permissu superiorum

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII **NOVEMBER 1984** **No. 10**

In This Issue

The awareness and defence of human rights is an essential element in the promotion of a better quality of life We must not forget how much the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, signed unopposed by the UNO in December 1948, has contributed to the growing awareness of human dignity. Pope John Paul II touches often on these issues in his speeches all over the world. And if the new code of Canon Law says, "The Christian faithful can legitimately vindicate... the rights which they enjoy in the Church" (221.1), such vindication is not possible if they do not know what these rights are Not seldom one hears of cases where rights are easily trampled upon in the day to day life of the community. Can we say that the rights expressed in canon 219 ("All Christ's faithful have the right to immunity from any kind of coercion in choosing a state of life") and canon 1038 ("All can contract marriage who are not prohibited by law") are always respected ? Fr George LOBO, Professor of Ethics at the Jnana Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune, makes a study of the many places where the new Code touches on various human rights. This study is the eighth of a series, started in VIDYAJYOTI in May 1983, introducing the new Code.

Fr J. KOTTUKAPALLY gives us the second and last part of his reflections on the "Nuclear Spectre" (cf VIDYAJYOTI, August 1984). Thoroughly documented and systematic, his assessment of the ways in which this danger has grown and looms large on humanity may not meet with everybody's agreement. But it is an issue we cannot ignore and of which all of us must keep ourselves informed. The growing revolt against nuclear madness is a positive sign of our times, and made evident by many indices. A recent example is the survey done among Protestants of the Federal Republic of Germany and published last September, according to which as many as 72% of those Christians are in favour of the pacifist movement.

November is not only the month of the *Parousia*. It is also a month that remembers the past. Frs E. HAMBYE and G. GISPERT-SAUCH present to us treasures from our antiquity, in the East and in the West, which we cherish with gratitude.

Human Rights in the New Code

George V. Lobo, S.J.

1. *Introduction*

VATICAN II has stressed the reverence due to the human person (*GS*, 27). Consequently, it says that "with respect to the fundamental rights of the person, every type of discrimination, whether social or religious, whether based on sex, race, colour, social condition, language or religion, is to be overcome and eradicated as contrary to God's intention" (*GS*, 29). The Council has issued an entire Declaration on Religious Freedom, *Dignitatis Humanae Personae*. This points out that people cannot exercise their religious duties unless they enjoy immunity from external coercion as well as psychological freedom (n. 1). It affirms: "The protection and promotion of the inviolable rights of man ranks among the essential duties of government" (n. 6).

The Church being the "sacrament of the unity of all mankind' (*LG*, 1), it is all the more her duty to promote the dignity and rights of man. The Council frankly admits that in the past, "there have at times appeared in the Church ways of acting which were less in accord with the spirit of the Gospel and even opposed to it" (*DH*, 12) Now that the Church is coming out more and more as a champion of human rights in the world, her credibility would require that she herself would be the model of respect for human rights within her own fold.

Pope Paul VI has emphasized the fundamental supernatural rights of every member of the Church and his or her freedom founded in the Spirit. He wanted the rights of the individual faithful and of every human person as such to be juridically protected.[1]

The First Synod of Bishops, 1967, included the protection of the rights of persons and procedure for the protection of these rights among the ten guiding principles for the revision of the Code of Canon

1. Address of 17 September 1973 to the Second Congress of Canon Law, *The Pope Speaks*, 18 (1973) 281.

Law.[2] The Bishops wanted that the New Code emphasize the fundamental equality of all the faithful and provide appropriate judicial and administrative measures to protect rights of persons from arbitrary exercise of authority.

According to the Apostolic Constitution promulgating it, the New Code is meant to achieve orderly development of the ecclesial society and of the individual persons who belong to it. The Pope explicitly says that the Code is not meant to replace faith, grace, charism, and above all charity in the life of the Church.[3] Hence all the laws have to be so interpreted and applied that they foster the free exercise of the charism of each member of the Church.

Indeed, very often the obligations of one section of the People of God are directed to the protection of the rights of others. For instance, clerical responsibilities should be seen as implicit affirmations of lay rights, particularly, but not exclusively in the sacramental order. The study group on the Laity in the Code Commission wisely viewed the recognition and protection of the rights of the faithful as an important way of assuring the vital ecclesial involvement of all the believers.[4]

2. *General Approach to Rights in the New Code*

The New Code goes further than any earlier canonical document in articulating the fundamental rights of all the members of the Church. The Old Code merely stated the general principle that "Baptism constitutes a human being a person in the Church of Christ, with all the rights and duties of Christians" (Old C. 87). Then, apart from the right of the laity to receive spiritual goods, especially helps to salvation from the clergy (Old C. 682), there were only stray references to rights. Now the importance of rights is much more in evidence. This is particularly true regarding the right of the laity to share in the Church's mission in their own distinctive fashion, and not simply in a way derived from the mandate of the hierarchy. The New Code rightly emphasizes the correlative aspects of obligations and rights.

However, unfortunately, there is still an overemphasis on the duties of the faithful to the detriment of their rights. The formulation of rights is overly conditioned so that their limitation appears as essential to the rights themselves and not related to their responsible exercise. At times the rights seem to be conceded reluctantly. There seems to be a needless fear of abuse resulting in an undue qualification of the rights in contrust with the clarity of affirmation in conciliar and

2. See *Communicationes*, 1 (1969) 101-13.
3. P. xiii of the English edition.
4. See *Communicationes*, 2 (1970) 89-93.

other sources. Often the faithful seem to be viewed as mere subjects of the hierarchy, rather than as mature Christians with a sacramentally based dignity and right to share in the Church's mission.

3. *Interpretation of Laws*

The dignity of the human person requires that the fullest freedom, consistent with his or her responsibilities, be recognized. Hence the exercise of freedom is to be curtailed only when this is called for by the common good. Similarly one should have the fullest right to marry, etc., unless this is expressly limited by the law for a proportionately good reason. This basic principle is spelt out in some of the norms for the interpretation of the Canons. "Only those laws are to be considered invalidating or incapacitating which expressly prescribe that an act is null or that a person is incapable" (C. 10).

Baptized persons who are not Catholic are no more considered bound by mere ecclesiastical laws (C. 11). Christians not in full communion with the Catholic Church are not necessarily considered as bad Catholics. The identity of their Church or ecclesial communion is recognized.

According to the traditional adage, "in doubt, liberty". This is spelt out as follows: "Laws, even invalidating or incapacitating ones, do not oblige when there is doubt of law" (C. 14). When there is doubt of fact, the Ordinaries can dispense, unless, in the case of a reserved dispensation, the authority to whom the dispensation is reserved is not wont to dispense in the matter.

Likewise, it is stated that "in doubt, a strict interpretation is to be given to those administrative acts which concern litigation, or threaten or inflict penalties, or restrict rights of persons, or harm acquired rights of others, or run counter to a law in favour of a private person" (C. 26). Again, an administrative act "has no effect in so far as it harms the acquired right of another unless the competent authority has expressly added a derogatory clause" (C. 38).

"Odious matters are to be restricted." Hence "laws which prescribe a penalty, or restrict the free exercise of rights" are to be interpreted strictly (C. 18).

When one reads that "laws are authentically interpretated by the legislator or by that person to whom the legislator entrusts the power of authentic interpretation" (C. 16, 1), it may appear that the evolution of the legal system is kept under the exclusive and centralized control of the law-maker. But this is balanced by the affirmation: "Custom is the best interpreter of laws" (C. 27). There is a creative tension

between the principle of authority, on the one hand, and voluntary and creative acceptance of the law, on the other. As L. Orsy puts it, "thus the people are called to contribute, out of their wisdom, through their insights, to the prudent interpretation and application of laws".[5]

Most of these general principles of interpretation are taken from the Old Code. But they acquire a new meaning in the context of the stress on human rights.

4. *Use of Power*

The Code tries to provide protection against *arbitrary use of power*. Decision making frequently calls for obligatory *consultation*, at times with a deliberative vote of the Council.

Great prudence is enjoined on those who issue decrees or precepts. "Before issuing a decree, the person in authority is to seek the necessary *information* and *proof*, and, as far as possible, is to *consult* those whose rights could be harmed. The draft of the Code was even more stringent. The person in authority was required to make known in writing to the person likely to be affected the facts and factors under consideration, and the reasons for the decree. He had to grant a hearing to all whose rights could be injured and afford them the right of counsel unless the delay could be harmful.[6] The final version leaves more discretion to the superior, but it should not be used arbitrarily.

In order to protect the rights of persons concerned, the Code requires that a decree be issued *in writing*. When it is a decision, it should express, at least in summary form, the *reasons* for the decision" (C. 51). Thus a seminarian may not be sent away peremptorilly without expressing the reasons, at least briefly, in writing.

Procrastination is often a bane of ecclesiastical functioning. This is sought to be avoided by the provision: "Whenever the law orders a decree to be issued, or when a person who is concerned lawfully requests a decree or has recourse to obtain one, the competent authority is to provide for the situation within three months of having received the petition or recourse, unless a different period of time is prescribed by law" (C. 57, 1).

Further it is said: "A presumed negative reply (by lapse of time) does not relieve the competent authority of the obligation of issuing

5. "The Church's New Laws", *The Tablet*, 237 (1983) 422.
6. See T. J. Green, "The Revision of Canon Law: Theological Implications", *Theological Studies*, 40 (1979) 606.

the decree, and, in accordance with C. 128, of repairing any harm done" (C. 57, 3).

At times, the observance of certain laws may become unduly burdensome, even when the difficulty would not be such as to give rise to a simple excuse. This is sought to be mitigated by the system of *dispensations*. Now the diocesan Bishop can dispense from all disciplinary laws, both universal and particular (although not from procedural and penal laws, nor from those whose dispensation is specially reserved to the Holy See, C. 87, 1). In danger of death or if there would be grave harm in delay, any Ordinary can dispense, provided the dispensation is one which the Holy See grants in the same circumstances (C. 87, 2). Priestly celibacy is needlessly excluded from this (Cf. C. 291).

5. Canonical Status of Physical Persons and Their Acts

While basic human rights follow from the very fact of one being a human person, rights and duties proper to Christians come from their incorporation into Christ and the Church through Baptism (C 96). These rights hold in so far as one is in ecclesiastical communion, unless a lawfully issued sanction intervenes. So even those erring have the right to receive care and solicitude from the pastors of the Church. On the other hand, it is never lawful for anyone to force others to embrace the Catholic faith against their conscience (C. 748, 2).

In line with recent thinking, the *age of maturity* has been reduced from 21 to 18 (C. 97, 1).

Discrimination against women in the matter of domicile has been removed (C 104) While, normally, spouses are to have a common domicile, by reason of lawful separation or for some other just reason, each can equally have his or her own domicile. However, discrimination in the matter of rite is still there regarding the child, but not regarding the wife (Cf. CC. 111, 1 and 112, 1°, 2°).

Unfortunately, the notion of *illegitimacy* has been retained in Marriage Law. However, it has no more any effect in any matter such as "irregularity" for sacred Orders.

In order to ensure freedom of action, any act performed as result of irresistible *force* is declared null (C. 125, 1). An act performed as a result of *grave fear* or *deceit* is rescindible (C. 125, 3). In certain important matters, it is even declared invalid, e.g., in the case of elections (C. 172), religious profession (C. 656, 3°, 4°) and marriage (CC. 1098; 1103).

Restitution is prescribed for violation of rights through unlawful acts. "Whoever unlawfully causes harm to another by a juridical act, or indeed by any other act which is deceitful or culpable, is obliged to repair the damage done" (C. 128).

6 *Removal from Office*

In removing a person from office, rights possibly acquired in any way are to be safeguarded (C. 192). Also the procedure defined by the law has to be observed (C. 193). Even when the office is such that it is conferred at the discretion of the competent authority, there is need for a just reason for removal (C. 194).

During their period of office, *religious seperiors* may be removed or transferred to another office only for reasons prescribed in the institute's own law (C. 624, 3).

For the removal or transfer of a *parish priest*, the formalities prescribed in the procedural law (CC. 1740-52) are to be complied with. The priest is to be given a chance to explain his case. In the case of removal, the Bishop has to discuss the matter at the initial stage itself with the two priests stably chosen for this purpose by the Priests' Senate; and again, if the priest opposes the case. In the matter of transfer, the Bishop has to discuss the matter with the two priests only if the concerned priest refuses to acquiesce in the proposal for transfer.

7. *Right to Representation*

While the faithful are to show Christian and responsible obedience to the teachings and prescriptions of the sacred Pastors, they are free to make known their needs, especially their spiritual needs and their wishes to them (C. 212, 2).

They have the right, in keeping with their knowledge, competence and position, to manifest to the sacred Pastors their views on matters which concern the common good of the Church.

The effective exercise of this right to participate in ecclesiastical decision-making by the laity calls for the establishment of diocesan and parish pastoral councils, although the Code does not make them mandatory (CC. 511; 536).[7]

It is also said that the faithful have the right to make their views known to others. But this is qualified by the need of respecting the integrity of faith and morals, due reverence to the Pastors and taking

7. Vatican II had called pastoral councils 'highly desirable', *Christus Dominus*, N. 27. Cf. *Ecclesiae Sanctae*, I, 16.

into account the common good and the dignity of individuals (C. 212, 3). The exchange of views must be free and constructive.

It would seem that the laity must have the right to make their mind known in the appointment of Bishops. The Code only asks the papal legate, if he thinks it expedient, to seek the opinion of lay persons of outstanding wisdom (C. 377, 3).

8. *Right to Participate in the Apostolate*

The Code acknowledges that all of Christ's faithful, through Baptism, participate, although in their own way, in the priestly, prophetic and kingly office of Christ and hence have the right to exercise the mission which God entrusted to the Church to fulfil in the world (C. 204, 1). The Code even goes to the extent of saying that "flowing from their rebirth in Christ, there is a genuine equality of dignity and action among all of Christ's faithful" (C. 208). The consequences of this statement are far-reaching although they have been drawn with some hesitation.

Lay people could be called upon to help the hierarchy in its mission. However, since they are deputed to the apostolate by their very Baptism and Confirmation, they have the right, "whether as individuals or in association, to strive so that the divine message of salvation may be known and accepted by all people throughout the world" (C 225, 1). They have the proper mission of permeating and perfecting the *temporal order* with the spirit of the Gospel (C. 225, 2) They have the right "to have acknowledged as theirs that freedom in secular affairs which is common to all citizens" (C. 227). Parish priests are asked to recognize and promote the specific role of the laity in the mission of the Church (C. 529, 2).

For *Right to Association* see my article "Laity in the New Code", VIDYAJYOTI, June-July 1984, pp. 293-400.

9. *Right to Knowledge and Education*

Christian parents have the primary right and responsibility to ensure the Christian education of their children (C. 226, 2). This right in India is often associated with minority rights. While it should be vindicated, care must be taken to see that it does not lead to communalism or to the excessive concentration on alienated and alienating formation in the name of Christianity.

Knowledge of Christian doctrine is not to be the preserve of the clergy. Lay people too have the right to acquire the knowledge of Christian doctrine which is appropriate to each one's capacity and

condition (C. 229, 1). They have the right to attend ecclesiastical universities and faculties, get academic degrees in sacred sciences and even receive the mandate to teach them (C. 229, 2, 3).

However, the requirement of a 'mandate' (C. 812) to teach in ecclesiastical faculties may itself pose a problem for academic freedom. The Code itself says that those who are engaged in the fields of sacred study should have a just freedom in research matters as well as in expressing themselves prudently concerning them with due allegiance to the magisterium (C. 218). There may be a tension between academic freedom and loyalty to the teachings of the magisterium. But that is no reason to deny or unduly restrict academic freedom.

Previous censorship has been maintained. But this is now obligatory only for Scripture texts, liturgical or prayer books, catechisms and other writings pertaining to catechetical formation. Other writings dealing with sacred sciences have to be approved by the local Ordinary only if they are used as textbooks (CC. 825-27). While there is need of protecting the simple faithful from misleading views, their freedom to deepen their faith by being exposed to different points of view should also be respected.

It may be noted that the Index of Forbidden Books was already abolished in 1965. In a Press interview for an Italian weekly *Gente*, Cardinal Ottaviani, pro-Prefect of the S.C. for the Doctrine of the Faith admitted that the erstwhile Holy Office had strayed from the course determined by Pope Benedict XIV (1740-58) and had replaced it by an authoritarian procedure. He declared that henceforth there would be ample possibilities of self-defence for the authors.[8]

However, the Holy See has reserved to itself the right of vigilance, and to disapprove of and condemn certain works[9] Recently there were some cases of withdrawal of the '*imprimatur*' by the bishops at the instance of the Holy See. Apparently there was not sufficient dialogue with the authors and publishers.

10. *Right to Spiritual Care*

The parish clergy have the obligation of meeting the right of the faithful to have the Word of God proclaimed and to have the sacraments celebrated devoutly (C. 528). Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them and are properly disposed (C. 843, 1). While it is strongly recommended that Holy Communion be received during the eucharistic celebration, for

8. See *Clergy Monthly*, 30 (1966) 280.
9. Cf. Notification of 14 June 1966, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 58 (1966) 445.

good reason, the faithful have the right to ask for it at another time *(C. 918). The practice of denying Baptism or First Communion to children just because their parents are living in irregular unions is without any foundation in law.* The children cannot be penalized for any fault of their parents.

No one can prevent a marriage that is not prohibited by law (C 1058). Now impediments have been greatly simplified in order not to interfere with the right to contract marriage with a person of one's choice. Dispensation for mixed marriages should be based on objective criteria and not on the personal inclinations of ecclesiastical authorities. It is difficult to see how diocesan authorities may require an absolute promise to bring up children in a mixed marriage as Catholics when the Code only requires the Catholic party to promise "to do all in his or her power" to do the same (C. 1125, 1). This question specially arises when only the Holy See can attach an invalidating clause to any temporary prohibition of a marriage by the local Ordinary (C. 1077, 2).

11. *Right to Reputation and Privacy*

C. 220 affirms the basic human right of every human person to good reputation and privacy. It is obvious that in the Church, the community of love, no one should give in to the natural tendency to settle scores by speaking ill of another. Further, everyone, for instance the clergy or religious, has the right of receiving a fair hearing when accused. Seminarians and junior religious must have a chance of giving their version when unfavourable reports are received about them.

The right to privacy during sickness has been aptly expressed by the present Pope who has been strenuously defending human rights. It is reported that when he was recovering from the attempt on his life, he remarked jokingly at the intrusions on his privacy by overzealous medical personnel: "During all my life, I have defended the rights of man; today I am that man !"[10]

The right to privacy comes in, for instance, in the matter of religious normally sending or receiving mail unopened. They have the right to have their secrets respected, especially by superiors.

Pope Pius XII gave a positive appreciation of psychological tests.[11] However, he stressed the sanctity and inviolability of personal intimacy:

10. Quoted in V. MARCOZZI, "Il diritto alla propria intimità nel nuovo Codice de Diritto Canonico", *La Civiltà Cattolica*, 134 (1983, IV) 574.

11. Allocution to the participants of XIII International Congress of Applied Psychology, 10 April 1958, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 50 (1958) 274.

"There is a large portion of his inner world which the person discloses to a few confidential friends and shields against the intrusion of others .. .And just as it is illicit to appropriate another's goods or to make an attempt on his bodily integrity without his consent, so it is not permissible to enter his inner domain against his will, whatever is the technique used".[12] The consent, moreover, is to be obtained freely.

Hence candidates for the priestly or religious life are not to be submitted to psychological tests, especially if they are of the projective type, without their explicit and free consent. The results are to be used with great discretion and are to be communicated only to those to whom it is absolutely necessary.

12. *Other Rights of Religious*

Religious superiors are asked to promote voluntary obedience of their charges by their reverence for the human person (C. 618). They are to give the members opportune assistance in their personal needs, especially in sickness (C. 619).

The superiors are bound to acknowledge the freedom due to the members concerning sacramental confession and the direction of conscience (C. 630, 1). They are forbidden in any way to induce the members to make a manifestation of conscience to themselves (C. 630). One of the ways in which this provision may be violated is to dub those who do not reveal secrets of conscience as 'not open' and then get their profession postponed.

While according to the old law, a junior religious could not be refused permission for renewal of profession or for final profession because of sickness, the interim law allowed this refusal. Now the New Code adds a qualification to this. It may be done "unless the infirmity was contracted through the negligence of the institute or because of work performed in the institute" (C. 689, 2).

Due process must precede the decree of dismissal of a religious (C. 697). Moreover, it has to be confirmed by the Holy See or the diocesan Bishop according as the institute is of pontifical or diocesan right. Here the human right of the person concerned to just treatment overrides the principle of subsidiarity.

13. *Rights of the Clergy*

The New Code tries to express the due rights of the clergy in relation to ecclesiastical authority. For the procedure required for the removal or transfer of parish priests, see Section 14.

12. *Ibid.*, p. 276.

A cleric who has lawfully migrated to another diocese cannot be indefinitely kept in suspense. At the end of five years, if he has declared his intention to be incardinated in the new diocese and neither the Ordinary of the old diocese nor of the new objects, he automatically obtains incardination (C. 268, 1).

The secular clergy have the right to associate with others for the achievement of purposes befitting the clerical state (C. 278, 1).

Clerics deserve the remuneration that befits their condition, the nature of their office, and their needs. Suitable provision is to be made for infirmity, sickness or old age (C. 281). While the clergy claim this right they should not ignore a similar right of lay people who are pledged to the special service of the Church (C. 231).

Priests have a special claim on the pastoral concern of the Bishop who is to defend their rights and see that they have the means for the development of their spiritual and intellectual life. He is to ensure that they are provided with adequate means of livelihood and social welfare (C. 384).

The Code also notes that clerics have a right to sufficient holidays every year, for the length of time determined by general or particular law (C. 283, 2).

14. *Human Rights in the Matter of Church Penalties*

Even in the application of civil penalties, the dignity of the human person is to be respected. Then all the more the penal law of the Church must be rooted in the idea of the Church as a community of grace for its members.[13] The human and baptismal dignity of the faithful rules out all social repression and vindictive penalties. However, the ecclesial community has the right and duty to protect its common good (cf. C. 1311) and the basic rights of its members, even while providing for the offender's return to the integrity of Christian life in freedom and love.

There must be an essentially healing dimension in the Church's sanctions, both for the offender and the entire community. Penalties are to be used only as a last resort, when all other pastoral-legal measures have failed and with due regard to the rights of individuals.

From this perspective, we can say that the reform of penal law in the New Code has made considerable headway, even though it falls short of expectations.

13. Cf. T. J. Green, "The Future of Penal Law in the Church", *Jurist*, 33 (1975) 216-18; V. de Paoli, "De recognescendo iure poenali canonico", *Periodica*, 63 (1974) 37-67.

The Code states that "penalties are to be established only in so far as they are really necessary for the better maintenance of ecclesiastical discipline (C. 1317). The number of *latae sententiae* or ipso facto penalties in the Code have been drastically reduced and other legislators are asked not to threaten such "except perhaps for some outstanding and malicious offences". (CC. 1318; 1319, 2). Particularly odious penalties such as denial of Christian burial have been abolished.[14]

Now there is greater emphasis on the judicial process in the infliction of penalties with the right to fair hearing and right of recourse. This is opposed to the predominantly administrative procedure in the past that was less sensitive to the exigencies of protecting rights. There is need of just reason to bypass judicial process (C. 1342, 1).

Moreover, the Ordinary is to start the process only when he perceives that neither by fraternal correction nor by any other method of paternal care, can the scandal be sufficiently repaired, justice restored and the offender reformed (C. 1341). Before the application of a censure, the offender is to be given at least one warning (C. 1347). If a person has been proved to be falsely accused, the Ordinary is to repair the harm by opportune warnings or even penal remedies (C. 1348). In imposing a penalty on a cleric, care must be taken that he does not lack sufficient support (C. 1350).

C. 1317 proposes a just penalty for those who reject the teachings of the Magisterium. However, as T. J. Green points, "there is a potential danger that the Church authorities may absolutize their personal positions while not allowing ample room for a healthy pluralism".[15] Hence there is need for the utmost caution, adequate consultation and opportunity for defence, if the freedom for research (cf. C. 218) is to be respected.

15. *Judicial Redress and Hierarchical Recourse*

A notable feature of the draft of the New Code was the provision for the so called *Administrative Tribunals* to obtain redress for alleged violation of rights even by ecclesiastical superiors.[16] However, they have been finally dropped, supposedly to avoid endless litigation.[17]

---

14. However the Code lays down that funeral rites are to be denied to manifest sinners if they could not be granted without public scandal of the faithful, unless they gave some sign of repentance before death (C. 1184).

15. Cf. T. J. Green, "Revision of Canon Law: Theological Implications", *Theological Studies*, 40 (1979) 638.

16. About the proposed "administrative tribunals"', see *Periodica*, 57 (1968) 602-52.

17. The stray references to them in CC 149, 2 and 1400,2 must have been left there by oversight.

The existing ecclesiastical courts are supposed to be a forum "to pursue or vindicate the rights of physical or juridical persons or to declare juridical facts" (C. 1400, 1, 1°). However, as L. Orsy remarks: "In theory, they are there to dispense justice to all, in all kinds of conflicts. In practice, they have become agencies for settling matrimonial cases..... They hardly ever handle ordinary issues of justice, still less do they, or can they, interpret or declare the meaning of the law with authority. The result is that hurts and conflicts, which are bound to arise in any human community, are either not handled judicially, or not handled at all."[18]

For the moment, we have to make the best of ecclesiastical tribunals such as they are, and at the same time utilize other avenues for protecting personal rights.

Matrimonial and other cases must be taken up promptly. If the revised formalities appear still too cumbersome, they must be understood as means of safeguarding the rights of persons and conducted in that spirit. All the tribunal personnel are to observe due secrecy. Unless there is a special reason, cases are to be heard in the order in which they have been received without respect for the importance or influence of persons (C. 1458). The judge is to ensure that a case is not unduly drawn out (C. 1465, 3).

In a penal process, care is to be taken that the preliminary investigation does not call into question anyone's good name (C. 1717, 2). When a judge summons the accused, he must invite the latter to engage an advocate; if he does not do so, the judge himself is to appoint an advocate (C. 1723). The Code says that "the accused person is not bound to admit to an offence" (C. 1728, 2). However, the principle stated in the penal law that "where there has been an external violation, imputability is presumed," does not seem to accord with modern views on jurisprudence. It is too bound up with the Roman Law. It seems to come under those limitations in Canon Law which have crept in, according to Pope Paul VI, because of an one-sided dependence on Roman Law. "It is unfortunately true that the Church, in the exercise of her power....has in the centuries borrowed from civil (Roman) legislation certain serious imperfections, even methods which seem unjust in the true and proper sense, at least objectively speaking".[19]

---

18. "Assessing the New Laws", *The Tablet*, 237 (1983) 446.
19. Allocution of 28 June 1971, *Acta Apostolicae Sedis*, 63 (1971) 139.

Even though there are no administrative tribunals in the strict sense, there are three other ways of seeking redress from administrative decrees from which one feels aggrieved:

1) ***Representation.*** The Code states that it is greatly to be desired that contention be avoided and "care be taken to reach an equitable solution by mutual consultation, possibly using the assistance of serious-minded persons, to mediate and study the matter" (C. 1733, 1). The possibility of such a dialogue should always be available, for which the ecclesiastical superior needs to have an open mind towards revising his decisions if it is necessary to do so.

2) The Episcopal Conference can prescribe that in each diocese there be established a permanent office or council (*board of arbitration*) for seeking and suggesting equitable solutions. A Bishop may establish such an office on his own (C. 1733, 2). The Code asks it to be diligent in its work and proposes some general norms for its functioning (C. 1733, 3). It is to be hoped that such boards of arbitration will be set up as early as possible in each diocese.

3) *Hierarchical Recourse*, that is appeal to the higher Superior of the one who issued the decree (C. 1737). The Code allows the right to the services of an advocate. Indeed, one is to be appointed *ex officio* if the person does not have one and the Superior considers it necessary (C. 1739).

Conclusion

It is by assiduously respecting the human rights of its members that the Church will be an effective sign of the new humanity to which the whole world is looking forward. Hence the importance of taking the canons on personal rights seriously, and of even striving to make these rights more clearly defined and defended. The emphasis on rights might make traditional minded people insecure or it may be a temptation for some to misuse them. But the Gospel path of true freedom is clear, whatever the dangers and pitfalls on the way.

Beyond the Balance of Terror

J. KOTTUKAPALLY, S.J

IN an earlier article[1], we analysed the situation now obtaining on the nuclear arms-race front and drew attention to the prophetic voices raised everywhere against the renewed and accelerated race, coupled with the breakdown of all arms-control negotiations. The purpose of this follow-up article is to reflect over the current situation with the hope of spotting a few rays of light amidst the enveloping darkness.

Terror Without Balance

The first point to be made is that the security of the "balance of terror", which had provided the kind of peace the world had been living with for a period and which formed the *de facto* basic principle of SALT I and SALT II, is no more. For one thing, with the arms race having now gone nearly mad and the superpower relations remaining frozen, even the modest gains of the SALT agreements would seem to be in jeopardy. Secondly, at least for President Reagan and his bureaucrats and technocrats, the "Star Wars" are in earnest preparation. Reagan's determination to provide the US with the "fool-proof" nuclear protection cover by means of an anti-satellite and anti-ballistic missile defence system in the outer space is slowly but steadily materialising, notwithstanding articulate expressions of grave concern even within the United States.[2] With the star-wars weapons, the world would have to live with the third-generation of nuclear weapons, after the atom bomb and hydrogen bomb. Thirdly, if under the "mutual assured destruction" (MAD) covenant, a nuclear war was "unthinkable", the US and the NATO have come to believe, according to strategic analysts,[3] in waging and winning a nuclear war.

1. See *Vidyajyoti*, August 1984, 322-40.
2. See "The Case Against Star Wars Weapons", *Time*, 7 May 1984, 53-54 According to *Time*, 25 June 1984, 13, a ballistic missile-killing laser missile has been successfully tested by the US Army
3. Cf. C. RAJAH MOHAN, "Waiting for the Nuclear Winter: Breakdown of Nuclear Arms Control", *Social Scientist*, January 1984, 30-52; also cf. Ivan Fera's interview with former West German general, Gert Bastian, in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*, 20 May 1984, 56-59.

Given the superefficiency of the newest weapons in terms of speed, stealth capability and accuracy, it seems now possible selectively to attack weapons-silos and command and control centres through a disarming and paralysing first nuclear strike. This line of thinking underlies, it seems, the current NATO policy of "flexible response", and of deployment of the new US missiles in Europe. But, barring the NATO superhawks, almost everyone knowledgeable in this area in any way — organisations of scientists, religious leaders, the United Nations, statesmen, including Soviet leaders[4] — has raised anguished protests against the NATO policy, judged as wholly unrealistic, irresponsible and extremely dangerous.

The Question of Responsibility

According to Western media, the so-called Euro-missile crisis, which in popular imagination forms the centre piece of the present nuclear crisis, is mostly, if not entirely, the creation of the Soviet Union. The latter, so goes the argument, upset the European balance of arms and frightened the Europeans out of their wits by the nearly 250 triple warheaded SS-20s on the launch pads in European Russia, targeted against all major European cities. Europe had no other way to safeguard its security against this threat except by means of the US cruise and Pershing II missiles. The Soviets, being mortally afraid of these new US missiles (which are even more deadly than their SS-20s) tried every means to sway the NATO governments and public opinion against the deployment of these missiles, and, even, if possible, to split the NATO. But when they realised that they could neither bully the Europeans nor dissuade the US Administration from the deployment, they sulked and walked out of the negotiations. The US has always kept the door to negotiations at any level open; but the Soviets have chosen to withdraw in the hole they dug for themselves.

To appreciate the untenability of this Western argument one need not swallow the Soviet counter-argument that the SS-20s are no more than routine modernising replacements of the old-fashioned SS-4s and SS-5s, and that they pose no threat to the West, seeing that the Soviet Union has firmly pledged "no first strike". A judicious look at the data provided the Western media alone will expose the NATO position.

To start with, President Reagan is well known to be compulsively driven by his anti-communism and his faith in a nuclear arms buildup.[5]

4. Cf. my article cited under n. 1.

5. The three fundamental articles of the Reagan creed are free-market economy, anti-communism and nuclear-arms buildup (cf. "A View Without Hills or Valleys", *Time*, 6 February 1984, 10-11).

According to Time magazine, which cannot be faulted with Reagan baiting, Reagan has long since come to see the Kremlin leaders as thugs and bullies who try ceaselessly to stir up trouble around the world. "During the 1980 campaign, he said there would be no 'hot spots' if it were not for the Soviets; they would back down if, and only if, they were confronted with force." According to Reagan, "the only morality the Soviet leaders recognise is what will further their cause, meaning they reserve unto themselves the right to commit any crime, to lie, to cheat." As Reagan believes fervently, "we are enjoined by Scripture and the Lord Jesus to oppose...with all our might" the Soviet Union, which is "the focus of evil in the modern world".[6] Even after resolving "not to say things like that again,"[7] and after sending many "Dear Mr Chairman" letters to his Soviet counterpart, with the hope of touching the Russian heart (if such a thing existed),[8] he proclaimed on the US Independence day (July 4) 1984, with reference to the Soviet Union: "The totalitarian world is a tired place held down by the gravity of its own devising, and America is a rocket pushing upwards to the stars."[9] Coupled with this blind and simplistic anti-communism and anti-Sovietism is Reagan's lack of knowledge as well as analytical grasp of complex political, let alone technological, issues.[10] If one of Reagan's chief 1980 campaign issues was the "fatally flawed" SALT II which had been signed by Carter and Brezhnev in 1979, the Reganaut bureaucracy's pursuit of arms control has been, according to *Time*, "a story of intransigence, infighting — and perhaps missed opportunities."[11] All this seems to make evident beyond any possible doubt that the Reagan Administration's approach to arms control has indeed been *fatally flawed*, marked by showmanship, but devoid of seriousness, conviction and good faith, indeed "the emperor's new clothes" under whose cover to pursue feverish arms buildup.

An important point to remember is that the Euro- missile (or INF) issue is, indeed, part of a threefold crisis, as we have seen. The issues of the "Star Wars" and the failure of the START are as serious as, if not even more serious than, the INF issue. According to the analysis of *Time*, the lion's share of the responsibility for the highly dangerous and irresponsibly adventurous rocketing up of the arms race into outer space through the development of the "Star Wars" weapons and for the breakdown of the START must go to Reagan and to his bureaucracy. Concluding his "Special Report" on the failure of the START, *Time's* diplomatic correspondent,

---

6. For the three quotations see *Time*, 2 January 1984, 13.
7. *Ibid.*, 21.
8. Cf. "Searching for a Pen Pal", *Time*, 2 July 1984, 32; also, "Changing His Tune," *Time*, 25 June 1984, 34-35.
9. *Time*, 16 July 1984, 18.
10. Cf. "A View Without Hills or Valleys," cited under n. 5.
11. *Time*, 5 December 1983, 15-23.

Strobe Talbott, wrote "The Soviets have from the outset shown signs of being willing to improve on what the Joint Chiefs called SALT II's 'modest but useful' regulation of strategic arms race, but they have yet to see an American proposal that meets them halfway .. Whether a second Reagan Administration will adopt a new, more realistic start policy will be determined to some extent by the President's own goals .. Given his apparent inability to engage himself in the arms-control policy-making process, much will depend on the team to which he delegates the task of realising his objectives. His current team is dominated by individuals who have proved themselves unable, or unwilling, to pursue strategic arms control in a way that yields progress with the Soviets or that generates support from Congress" [12]

As for the INF crisis itself, the Soviet Union is almost routinely blamed for it, not only by the Western media, but even by eminent Indian analysts like J. D. Sethi.[13] The argument is simple, as noted earlier: The Soviet Union upset the existing strategic balance in Europe by deploying the deadly new category missiles, the SS-20s, targeted at all European cities. The NATO could not let this threat to the heart of Europe go uncountered, and decided (1979) to deploy the new US missiles by the end of 1983, unless force-reduction agreement was reached between the superpowers by that time. Following this "dual-track" decision, the US went to Geneva for the INF talks in 1982. The Soviet adamantly stuck to the position that they would absolutely not brook the introduction of the new US missiles into Europe. President Reagan then offered his famous "zero option", which required the dismantling of the SS-20s throughout the Soviet Union in return for US's refraining from deploying the new missiles. The would-have-been "ideal" offer was spurned by the Soviets. The US then offered the "interim solution" of 300 new US missiles against 300 SS-20s.[14] The Soviets, however, would not budge, and so the US had no option but to go ahead with the deployment and risk the threatened Soviet walkout.[15]

To evaluate this Western case, certain basic factors must be considered. The Western position is that it feels mortally threatened by the superiority of the Warsaw Pact conventional forces and, therefore, the nuclear deterrent is indispensable for its security. The Soviet response to this is that, if the West indeed feels so threatened, the Warsaw Pact nations are only too willing to sign a no-agression pact with the

12. *Time*, 25 June 1984, 24; also, "The Case Against Star Wars Weapons," cited under n. 2.

13. E.g., J. D. SETHI, "India and the INF Crisis," *Indian Express*, 10 December 1983.

14. The NATO decision was deploy 572 new US missiles (108 Pershing IIs in West Germany and 464 cruise missiles in Britain, Italy, Belgium and Holland).

15. See "Special Report" in *Time*, 5 December 1983.

West and even to disband itself against the disbanding of the NATO [16] The West refuses this offer. The alleged reason is that the Soviet Union cannot be trusted; besides, the West is concerned with the human rights situation in the Warsaw-Pact countries.

As for the nuclear forces, the Soviet position is that it has always stood for not only a nuclear arms-free Europe but also for the immediate freezing of all arms production as well as the eventual banning of nuclear war and the dismantling of all existing nuclear weapons As a matter of fact, the initial Soviet offer at the INF talks was the general dismantling of all tactical and medium ranger nuclear weapons systems in every part of Europe. This was not negotiable for the US. The Soviet Union could not but reject the much advertised "zero option" of the US President, because that would have meant the dismantling of all its own INF missiles (throughout its territory) against the non-deployment of *new* US missiles — leaving all the existing NATO weapons systems, including the 162 British and French missiles intact. Similarly, Reagan's "interim solution" would have meant the reduction of existing Soviet missiles against an equal number of US missiles *to be deployed*. As for the existing tally, 938 Soviet delivery vehicles (missiles and bombers) were offset (at the beginning of the talks) by 857 on the NATO side, with NATO having a 50 per cent advantage in terms of warheads. It was this "approximate parity" which the Soviet Union could not allow to be upset. The Soviet Union was prepared to reduce the number of its delivery vehicles to 300 against as many NATO ones; it was even prepared to reduce the number of the SS-20s to 140 against the 162 British and French missiles and balance the number of warheads. None of these was acceptable to the US, the basic reason given being the "independent" nature of the British and French missiles. Neither Brtain nor France, it seems, would "compromise" its sovereignty by letting the superpowers bargain over their own missiles.

Considering that the factual data provided by the Soviets have not been contested, the kindest thing that a layman and outsider can say about the Western position is that it is insufferably arrogant and naive, seeing that it would have the Soviet Union acquiesce in the 162 British and French missiles as constituting no threat to its security. And the only conclusion that can be drawn from all this is that the US was never serious about the talks, which were meant merely to

16. The Soviet position, in its details, can be read in the Soviet periodical, *International Affairs*. Cf. especially, October 1983, 3-6; November 1983, 3-6, 55-64, 68-74; December 1983, 3-6; January 1984, 23-28; 63-109; February 1984, 3-7, 35-44, 84-92; April 1984, 22-28 & 65; May 1984, 96-102.

provide the cover for its furious arms buildup and to fool whoever could be fooled.

As for the Soviet Union's not being trustworthy, either dialogue and negotiations must take place on the basis of mutual trust, or the mask of dialogue and negotiations must be torn away. In regard to the question of human rights, they *are* subject to monstrous violations in both camps (even if the styles may be different), and, therefore, the West has no moral right to make this an issue in its diplomatic dealings and negotiations with its counterpart.

A word must be said also about the alleged threat to Western Europe by the "superior" Warsaw-Pact forces. It does seem to require initiation into the mysteries of strategic science to perceive the tale of this "threat" as a bizarre joke. Leave alone the terrible memories of the Napoleonic and Hitlerite invasions of Russia, which did not have even a fig leaf to cover their purely aggressive character[17], it sounds just incredible and irresponsible for the West to proclaim that the Soviet Union and its "satellites" are ready and able to pounce on and grab Western Europe. For, apart from propaganda, no serious analyst, either Western or neutral, has doubted the overall superiority of the NATO conventional forces over their Warsaw-Pact counterparts.[18] Add to it the following considerations: in terms of economic strength, which is acceptedly the basis of military strength, the Warsaw-Pact nations are not only no match by far to the NATO nations, but their economies are in many ways even dependent on those of the NATO nations; politically, while the NATO is self-proclaimedly the alliance of free and independent peoples, the Warsaw Pact is no more than a Soviet imposition on its "satellites", whose proud and restive peoples cannot be counted on by either the respective goverments or by the Soviet Union to loyally shed their blood in the cause of a Soviet adventure to spread its ideology. Any doubt left on this score must disappear when we listen to two most respectable Western experts, quoted by papers whose loyalty to the cause of the West and to its values need not be doubted. *Time* magazine quotes Gregory Flynn, deputy director of the Paris-based Atlantic Institute, to conclude its report on the debate on whether the Soviet Union is looking forward to a war: "The preponderance of evidence is that the Soviets just do not want to fight a war".[19] *The Tablet* reports that Michael Howard, professor of modern history in the University of Oxford, argued in a lecture in January 1983 that "wars in the past have not been caused primarily by 'great armaments' but especially by a pre-disposition to war on the part of cultures which regarded it as natural to settle contentious issues by armed conflict. The Soviet Union ... does not have this predisposition".[20]

In the light of the foregoing, the oft spoken-of moral dilemma of the West, either to seek security in nuclear deterrence or to expose itself to Soviet blackmail, must be judged to be just phoney.

---

17. Out of the 50 million lives lost in World War II, the Soviet Union's share was 20 million.

18. Cf. C. Rajah Mohan, *art. cit.* under n. 3; also, Interview with Gert Bastian, cited *ibid*.

19. "Debate over a Doctrine," *Time*, 2 January 1984, 25.

20. *The Tablet*, 22 October 1983, 1023.

Deterrence is Unsustainable

Deterrence is the well-known principle of the arms race, proclaimed as such by the West and tacitly acknowledged by the Soviet Union. It means dissuading the enemy from attacking through the fear of a retaliation that must cause unacceptable damage to the attacker.

It must be stressed that, in our specific context, deterrence has significantly different purposes for the NATO and the Soviet Union The latter would deter only a nuclear attack by its deterrent force, and has, accordingly, renounced the option of a first nuclear strike under any circumstance, while declaring that retaliation to a first strike on its or ally territory will be massive The NATO, as we saw, has refused to reciprocate, and would deter also a conventional attack by its nuclear deterrent. *And it must be observed that the Western ethical apologists of the nuclear deterrent either ignore or refuse to acknowledge this glaring and all-important difference, as they assume that the West's nuclear deterrent is directed solely against the Soviet nuclear forces.*

The enthusiastic Western votaries of deterrence would, no doubt join Reagan who declared with aplomb and headiness (unless cynicism is the right epithet) in an interview with *Time* early this year: "On the international scene I think that we have made great progress. I would like to see us continue until there is a feeling that we have peace throughout the world, that we have reduced the danger brought about by the excessive armaments in the world." Reagan's unshakable conviction is that, sitting atop an armament pile that can destroy the entire civilisation many times over and still pushing up the pile to unimaginable heights, "we are safer, we are stronger, and peace is more assured today than it has been in recent years."[21]

The Soviets, while declaring themselves determined to remain in the nuclear arms race in order not to be left behind, do so with scepticism and with a poignant sense of tragedy. According to the late Yuri Andropov, addressing the CPSU Central Committee:

> "The arms race can and must be terminated. Mankind deserves a better fate than living in a conflict-rent world, suffocating under the burden of deadly weapons".[22] "The Soviet Union is convinced that peace can be strengthened and the security of peoples guaranteed not by way of building up and inventing ever new types of armaments but, on the contrary, by way of reducing the existing armaments to unmeasurably lower levels Mankind has too many tasks which are not being solved only because colossal material, intellectual and other resources are being diverted."[23]

---

21. *Time*, 6 February 1984. 9.
22. *International Affairs*, November 1983, 5.
23. *Ibid*, December 1983, 5f.

Politicians, of course, do not discuss ethics. For this discussion we must turn to philosophers and theologians; and, predictably, we can find a whole gamut of views on the morality of nuclear deterrence. No one, however, confronted with this problem is unaware of "this ghastly paradox: the reliance of the human race for its safety rests on the instruments of its own destruction."

According to the apologists, deterrence has come to stay, as part of contemporary national security and international *realpolitik*. Others, somewhat less sure of their position, would still accept it as some sort of an "interim solution," "as a step on the way to disarmament." Others are more sceptical and would accord it only "a strictly conditioned moral acceptance."

The apologists' case was perhaps best stated by Anglican bishop Hugh Montefiore at the General Anglican Synod, which, in February 1983, gave its approval to Britain's official nuclear policy — minus the "first strike" option. The bishop said: "For the deterrent to be credible, we must be prepared to use it. But to use it would be catastrophic and immoral. The objection is formidable, but not overwhelming. If it is effective, the force will deter and never be used. That is the justification. To be determined to use it in response to a nuclear attack has ensured so far, and I believe will continue to ensure, that there is no nuclear aggression."[24] Such, in substance, is well known to be the argumentation of critcs and opponents (many of them eminent Catholics) of the US Catholic bishops' Peace Pastoral, as well as that of the bishops of West Germany and France.[25] Thus, according to the apologists, even if the hypothetical use of nuclear weapons was immoral, the actual prevention of a nuclear war by the possession of nuclear weapons and the determination to use them conditionally neutralises the objection and renders it moral.

As was pointed out above,[26] what the apologists would justify happens *not* to be the actual NATO policy. Further, the determi-

24. *Time*, 21 February 1983, 44. Note that Britain's and NATO's "flexible-response" policy is meant to "deter" also a conventional attack by the Waraw-Pact forces.

25. Cf., e.g., John LANGAN S.J., "The American Hierarchy and Nuclear Weapons, "*Theological Studies*, 43 (1982), 447-467; William V. O'BRIEN, "Just-War Doctrine in a Nuclear Context, "*Ibid.*, 44 (1983), 191-220; Kilian McDONNELL, "US Bishops Challenged, " *The Tablet*, 12 February 1983, 126-127; John DEEDY, "US, Bishops Make History", *Ibid.*, 28 May 1983, 496-499; Robert SPAETH, "In Defence of Deterrence," *Ibid.*, 23 June 1984, 592-594. For reports about the West German and French pastorals, see *The Tablet*, 7 May 1983, 434 and 19 November 1983, 1132. David HOLLENBACH S.J., "Nuclear Weapons and the Nuclear War: The Shape of the Catholic Debate, "*Theological Studies*, 43 (1982), 577-605 and Gerard HUGHES S.J. "Four Unilateralists, "*The Tablet*, 4 June 1983, 520-521, see an unresolvable moral ambiquity in the nuclear issue.

26. See p. 506.

nation to use conditionally what *is* immoral hardly seems to render the determination moral.

At the other extreme are those who uncompromisingly oppose nuclear deterrence on strategic, political, environmental and specifically moral grounds. Strategically, they say, nuclear weapons, given their indiscriminate and incalculable destructive capacity (counting, as it must be counted, the retaliation), can defend nothing and nobody. They do not believe that it is nuclear weapons that have till now prevented the outbreak of a Third World War. Quite otherwise, according to them, deterrence, with its inbuilt tendency to unlimited escalation of the arms buildup and based on mutual mistrust and suspicion, has actually and enormously increased the *risk* of war — by accident, misunderstanding, or defective communication. For, as it has happened in the past, most notably in the case of World War I, wars can get started by a stray event, not meant to start a war, but starting it all the same; and it is the ugly paradox of deterrence that "one side's quest for safety can heighten the other side's insecurity." Neither do they believe that the Warsaw-Pact states are planning or capable of a war to annex Western Europe.[27]

Environmentally, deterrence is unacceptable for the obvious reason of the highly dangerous and enormous environmental pollution due to the production and testing of weapons in ever-increasing number and destructive potential, even in the absence of war.

Deterrence is ethically wrong, not because the possession and *preparedness* to use nuclear weapons are not identical with their actual or intentional use,[28] but because they are weapons of mass destruction of enormous proportions and *cannot be used as defensive weapons*. Unlike non-nuclear weapons, which can be used to attack or to defend and are, therefore, of themselves morally neutral, nuclear weapons are, by their very nature, exclusively and all-embracingly destructive and offensive.[29] Moreover, owing to the enormous costs involved,

---

27. However, if it should happen (*per improbabile* if not *per impossibile*, so to say) that a non-nuclear Western Europe found itself defenceless before a Warsaw-Pact onslaught, they would "rather be red than dead"; for, as Gert Bastian says in the interview cited above (n. 3), "In a nuclear war, it is better to be victims than criminals."

28. This confusion does seem to exist in the polemics on this issue. In terms of the morality of defence, one may keep and be prepared to use in just defence a weapon which one may not otherwise use.

29. Hence the special relevance of Vatican II's solemn and wholly unambiguous stance: "Any act of war aimed indiscriminately at the destruction of entire cities or of extensive areas with their population is a *crime against God and man himself. It merits unequivocal and unhesitating condemnation*. The unique hazard of modern warfare consists in this: it provides those who possess modern scientific weapons with a kind of occasion for perpetrating just such *abominations*. Moreover, through a

the nuclear weapons industry deprives millions of the most needy of their basic necessities.[30]

This is the position of the Peace Movements, as well as of the World Council of Churches, as they unhesitatingly condemn nuclear war and call for the ban on nuclear-weapons industry and research altogether. This is also, it must be noted, effectively, if only implicitly, the position Vatican II took nearly two decades ago. The Council, as we have seen in the previous article, has *condemned* nuclear war with uncharacteristic harshness and has expressed itself with extreme scepticism on the question of the arms race meaning deterrence.[31]

Between the two extremes there are compromising positions. The first of these, deserving mention, is that of Pope John Paul II. According to the Pope, "In the current conditions, 'deterrence' based on balance, certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament, may still be judged morally acceptable. Nonetheless, in order to ensure peace, it is indispensable not to be satisfied with this minimum which is always susceptible to the real danger of explosion."[32]

The papal "approval" of deterrence is therefore highly qualified. The pope is only *conceding* the possibility of the moral acceptability of deterrence "in the current conditions." Even this concession is further restricted by the grave warning immediately edded. But there is still another restriction on the approval, which *effectively nullifies* it. It is contained in the parenthesis, "certainly not as an end in itself but as a step on the way toward a progressive disarmament." There is no doubt in the mind of the pope that even the highly qualified moral acceptability of deterrence does not cover it "as an end in itself"; it *may* be acceptable *only* "as a step on the way towards progressive disarmament."

---

certain *inexorable* chain of events, it can urge men on to the *most atrocious* decisions" (*GS*, n. 80; emphases added) As was earlier pointed out such harshness of language is wholly uncharacteristic of the Council

30. See statistics on p 513 below. The added, specifically theological, consideration is not that faith in God and the following of Jesus demands adherence to radical pacifism and non-violence, as it is sometime made out; it is rather that, trusting human destiny to the "security" provided by weapons of effectively unlimited destructive capacity is to deny God's providence as well as man's basic moral sense.

31. *GS*, n. 81. It must be added that to characterise the Peace Movements as "Unilateralist" is to be cynical towards facts. It is the Soviet Union which *has* unilaterally renounced the option of nuclear "first strike" and consistently declared its willingness to go along with any move to destroy nuclear weapons and to ban nuclear war altogether.

32. *L'Osservatore Romano*, Weekly Edition, 21 June 1982, 4.

This qualification of deterrence is itself curious and intriguing. One can understand the claim that deterrence ensures peace of a sort; but no one seems to have yet thought of claiming that deterrence is "a step on the way towards progressive disarmament." On the contrary, in unison with all others who have dealt with this question, the pope himself stated just a few paragraphs earlier, quoting Paul VI: "The logic underlying the quest for balance of power impels each of the adversaries to seek to ensure a certain margin of superiority for fear of being left at a disadvantage."[33] That is to say, deterrence, by nature, leads to escalation, *not* to progressive disarmament And that is the evidence of historical experience.[34] The only plausible explanation of this anomally in the papal statement seems to be that the pope is echoing (whether approvingly or ironically, may be a matter of conjecture) President Reagan's proclaimed thesis of "negotiations from a position of strength". And it must be remembered that only four days before the papal address was read out at the UN special session on disarmament, Reagan was in the Vatican, where they "emerged from hour-long private talks with warm smiles and a mutual pledge to work for peace and justice."[35] But it *could* also be that the pope meant by the parenthesis that the tenuous moral acceptability of deterrence depends on a firm practical will to negotiate disarmament with sincerity and seriousness.

The US Catholic bishops' Peace Pastoral predictably devoted much attention to the question of deterrence.[36] Taking all the concrete elements of the question into consideration, "made in the light of John Paul II's evaluation, but applying it through our own prudential judgments," the pastoral is led to "a strictly conditioned moral acceptance of nuclear deterrence". The first condition laid down by the pastoral, namely, that nuclear deterrence may exist "only to prevent the use of nuclear weapons by others," directly renders the NATO policy of "flexible response" morally unacceptable. Other conditions are that there should be no quest for nuclear superiority but only adequate deterrence and that it should lead to progressive disarmament. This last condition, as we have just seen, in effect renders all nuclear deterrence morally unacceptable.

33. *Ibid*., 3, quoting Paul VI's message to the UN, 24 May 1978.

34. The modest successes in disarmament achieved during the sixties and seventies were due not to deterrence, but to its opposite, *detente*, based on mutual trust and an attitude of give and take

35. *The Examiner*, 26 June 1982, 412. Significantly (indeed, ominously, in the light of what is going on in Nicaragua and elsewhere), the report goes on: "In Latin America, Reagan said, the US wants 'to work closely with the church . . to prevent the spread of repression and godless tyranny'."

36. See *The Tablet*, 4 June 1983, 528-531.

II

New Cenvergences and Alliances

The nuclear crisis has predictably thrown up new equations and conglomerations on almost all levels. On the one hand, belying Western fears and Soviet hope, the NATO came through 1983 as a seemingly stronger-than-ever anti-Soviet bloc. Electorates in Britain and West Germany solidly stood by their hawkish governments and leaders. Even more significant, France's socialist President has proved himself more hawkish than almost any of his predecessors — by steadily building up France's nuclear arsenal (conducting open tests on Pacific islands in total disregard for the grave hazards this involves for the human beings and other life on relatively nearby islands), by making France a prime exporter of weapons, and, above all, by bringing France's foreign plocy in respect of the nuclear question closely in line with that of the US.

But there are even more significant convergences on the opposite side. As we have seen today there is a nearly total convergence of views, (in regard to the danger the nuclear weapons pose to humanity and in regard to the necessity to freeze nuclear-weapons development and the eventual banning of the use of nuclear weapons "as a crime against humanity") among the Peace Movements spread all over Europe and America, the scientific community, religious leaders and statesmen, barring the NATO leaders... and even the apparent solidity of the NATO conceals serious cracks beneath[37]

Britain's powerful opposition Labour Party and West Germany's equally powerful opposition Social Democratic Party have reversed their earlier policies and have now formally adopted nuclear policies at variance with the NATO policy The uncompromisingly antinuclear Greens Party in West Germany managed to net in enough votes to enter the federal parliament for the first time. According to latest reports, half of the British population and 63 per cent of the Dutch oppose the deployment of the new US missiles in Europe[38]. It is well known that Jesse Jackson, the US Black leader and a former contender for the Democratic Party's presidential ticket, has consistently stood against US's present nuclear policy and that influential senators like Edward Kennedy are for a nuclear-weapons freeze.[39] Neither have Spain and Greece, who are members of the NATO, owned up the official NATO policy. What is, finally, perhaps most significant about the present anti-nuclear convergence is that

---

37. That these cracks have created grave concern in the US is evident from Henry Kissinger's essay, "A Plan to Reshape NATO" in *Time*, 5 March 1984, 16-20.

38. *Time*, 16 April 1984, 10 According to a report in *The Tablet*, "Two recent national opinion polls confirmed that 62 per cent of the once aggressively anti-communist West German population now opposes an escalation in the arms race" (15 October 1983, 996).

39. In May 1983, the US House of Representatives voted a "non-binding" resolution, opposed by the Administration: 278 in favour, 149 against (*Time*, 16 May 1983, 33).

the Western Peace Movements are very much led by women, with the youth and *workers in general massively* supporting them.

There are indeed many Christians, here as well as abroad, who are inclined to dismiss this massive anti-nuclear-weapons convergence as the result of some diabolic mesmerisation by the Kremlin, because the Soviet Union, while being stoutly in the nuclear arms race, has consistently championed the cause of peace, indeed, ever since the October Revolution. On the level of popular faith, a good proportion of Christians, and not the least educated ones, live by the Reaganite dogma that the Soviet Union is a lying and sinister empire, "the focus of evil in the modern world," wholly devoid of humanity and moral sense, as it is Godless. The extent and depth of this kind of pre-judgment may be gauged from the nearly hysterical editorial which appeared in April last year in India's national Catholic weekly, *The Examiner* of Bombay, condemning the European Peace Movements for their opposition to the deployment of the new US missiles in Europe.[40] Even such a generally sober and fair-minded paper like *The Tablet* (London), which has consistently shown the highest respect for the Peace Movements, with whose policies and programmes it disagrees, would seem to share the made-up anti-Soviet mentality.[41] Why, even the pope (understandably but not justifiably, nonetheless) betrays the anti-Soviet mind-set when (ironically) in his Peace Day Message of 1984 he effectively reduces communism an ideology that is evil and closed to dialogue, "a global vision of humanity that is exclusive and almost Manichaean"[42]

This kind of pre-judgments and the attitude from which they arise, it goes without saying, forecloses the possibility of any serious dialogue. Neither do they correspond to the "entirely new attitude" with which Vatican II wanted the questions of war and international relations approached. Indeed, it is after the unambiguous rejection of the philosophy of deterrence that the Council goes on to suggest the alternative: "New approaches initiated by reformed attitudes must be adopted to remove this trap and to restore genuine peace by emancipating the world from its crushing anxiety."[43]

---

40. 9 April 1983

41. Thrice during 1983 the paper editorially repeated in nearly identical words its conviction that "The Soviet Union will yield nothing except under extreme pressure" (pp. 3, 99, 1023). It saw Andropov as "a cunning and sinister" leader (p. 3) In its view, "the USSR sees nuclear superiority as a weapon through which to dominate and influence the politics of weaker nations" (p. 1023); for the Soviets, "peace means socialism, achieved by any means; and it is on this and this alone that the legitimacy of the communist regime depends" (*ibid.*).

42. *The Examiner*, 14 January 1984, 18; also, see "Pope's 1983 World Peace Day Message," *The Examiner*, 29 January 1983, 69f.

43. *GS* n. 81.

God or Moloch ?

Our theological commitment and God-talk, it seems to me, imposes another important consideration upon us. If we are to go by the rhetoric, there seems to exist a rather curious alliance between the "defence of God," anti-communism and an implicit faith in the power of weapons.[44] This alliance is curious in that these self-appointed God-champions care little for either the word of God or for the misery and agony of God's poor, condemned to starvation and death in despair, while huge amounts money and other resources are pumped into the arms factories. If the arms-reduction talks have broken down, the North-South dialogue for a more equitable resource sharing between the rich and poor countries has not even started, while the United Nations Commerce Trade and Development agency seems to have not even symbolic successes to report. According to a PTI report, "Every minute 30 children die for want of food and inexpensive vaccines and every minute the world's military budget consumes 1,300,000 dollars of the public kitty... The world's stockpiles of nuclear weapons (50,000 warheads) represents an explosive force over 5,000 times greater than all the munitions used in World War II."[45] While about 40,000 children die of disease or hunger in the world every day and as many other children remain handicapped for life (UNICEF),[46] according to the US Arms Control and Disarmament Agency, the world will be spending one trillion (one hundred thousand crores) US dollars for weapons and other military purposes by next year.[47]

Here is a point, I feel, for us to ponder on. As the poor and their plight seem to be wholly irrelevant for Reagan's economic planning,[48] so there seems to be an, exclusive and unshakable faith in the power of weapons which marks his defence-and-security approach at all levels The man who himself became nearly a casualty to a mad gunman's bullet, which caused a nation-wide rethinking on the unlicensed personal possession of firearms, declared before the National Rifles Association, of which he is a lifelong member, in May 1983: "We will never disarm any American who seeks to protect his or her family", for "those who seek to inflict harm are not fazed by gun-control laws"[49]

---

44. It has been reported that one of the objects of Reagan's seeking re-election is "to find a place for God in our schools." On Reagan's passionate will to promote God's cause by opposing communism "with all our might," see Hugh Sidey, "The Right Rev. Ronald Reagan," *Time*, 21 March 1983, 26.

45. *Indian Express* 17 April 1984.

46. *Ibid.* 28 April 1984.

47. *Ibid.* 16 May 1984.

48. Significantly, even as the US is currently working a minor miracle in creating new jobs, the unemployment rate of black teen-agers "continues to hover at an intolerably high 40% to 50%, about triple that of their white counterparts" (*Time*, 25 June 1984, 42).

49. *Time*, 16 May 1983, 33.

In comparison with this sort of total faith in and the practical worship of the power of the weapons of destruction at virtually infinite scale, the danger these weapons pose to the entire human race and the terrible costs they extract from the poorest, especially children, Molech the Moabite god, *whose sacrificial offerings were children, and against whose worship the prophets thundered (cf. 2 Kings 23: 10; Jer 32: 35), would seem to be reduced to a toy god.*

Crossing the Ideological Barrier

The thesis, often clearly stated but generally assumed by many people in the West is that, unless you would capitulate before the Godless, totalitarian, materialistic ideology of communism, the NATO has to keep well ahead in the nuclear arms race, no matter what the material and human cost, no matter what terrible dangers the race might constitute to civilization and to life itself. In this group belong theologians, philosophers, public men and humanitarians of world renown.[50] There are others, who explode with moral indignation when they see all around them people incapable of morally differentiating between the US nukes (meant to defend "freedom and democracy") from the Soviet nukes (meant to spread "totalitarianism" all over the world).[51] On the other hand, at least some in the Peace Movements would seem to go by the assumption that, while they oppose the nuclear weapons uncompromisingly, they are not certain that the absence of the nuclear deterrence would not expose the West to a Soviet blackmail.[52]

I think it has become fairly clear that the Western dilemma is, in terms of actual data,[53] an imagined if not contrived one. In what follows my endeavour will be to explore whether an entrenched anti-communism and anti-Sovietism is not the cause of this compulsive imagining of the Soviet communist bogey, and whether approaching the Soviet Union and the communist ideology "with an entirely new

50 Cf n 25 above. According to the well-known humanitarian, Group Captain Leonard Cheshire, deterrence "offers a real hope of no conventional war between nuclear powers, no nuclear war between such powers and no subjection to an alien ideology" (*The Tablet*, 10 December 1983, 1214).

51. Cf *Time*, 9 July 1984, 33-34.

52. Indeed, there is a ring of resignation and defeatism in the words of Cardinal Bernardine (who was chairman of the drafting committee of the US Peace Pastoral) when he defended the stance of the pastoral by quoting a 1953 speech of Pope Pius XII, according to which, "it is not enough to have to defend oneself against any injustice to justify resorting to the violent means of war; when the dangers caused by war are not comparable to those of 'tolerated injustice', one may have the duty to suffer the injustice" (*The Tablet*, 29 January 1983, 90).

53. See above pp. 503-506

attitude,"[54] might not yield a better understanding of today's complex and delicate situation and some hope, based on reality and truth.

Earlier on we were obliged to conclude from the analysis of the current nuclear crisis that the responsibility for it must go mainly to the West and not to the Soviet Union. Now we must recall some of the most important historical facts intimately related to the present crisis. To start with, as the US Peace Pastoral has not flinched from stating, the United States enjoy the dubious distinction of being the *only* country to have ever used nuclear weapons, and used them not on military installations, but on thickly populated cities, instantly killing a hundred and fifty thousand innocent and war-exhausted people, when the Second World War was actually over in the West and the surrender of Japan was merely a matter of time. The US led the Soviet Union in the development of nearly every item of the nuclear weapons systems, developed and is now unilaterally holding on to the "flexible-response" policy, and is decided to carry the arms race into the outer space, disregarding warnings and protests from the Soviet Union and even from those who have held the highest offices of state in the US itself.[55] With the sense of impunity, not to say arrogance, arising from its unchallenged nuclear superiority, the US deployed its nuclear forces on the high seas as well as in Western European and Asian countries, thus nearly surrounding the entire expanse of the Soviet territory with its nuclear forces, all through the 1950s and 1960s. And it must be remembered that, while the Soviet Union thus helplessly remained the target of the US nuclear forces, the one inept Soviet attempt to reply to this threat by installing its own nuclear weapons in Cuba nearly brought about apocalypse and was defeated with much humiliation to the Soviet Union.

If the heroic resistance to the totally unprovoked Napoleonic invasion of their country has indelibly marked the Russian psyche, the Soviet Union has from its birth faced threats of physical liquidation by the West. Churchill's desire was to "strangle communism in the cradle", the Western nations spurned Lenins's offer of a no-war pact,

---

54. The expression is that of Vatican II *Time* recalls with nostalgia J F. Kennedy's "The American University speech" (judged to be his greatest speech), in which "he asked *the American people to re-examine their attitudes towards the Soviet* Union He set the US Government on a course of creative and conciliatory diplomacy. To show his good faith he announced the end of this nation's nuclear tests in the atmosphere. From the words and thoughts of that speech flowed the test ban treaty, ... the first *grain* sale to the Soviets, and the first nuclear arms *limitation* agreement" (25 April 1983, 28).

55. Answering *Time*'s query, former President Richard Nixon and Dean Rusk, Secretary of State under Kennedy and Johnson, deprecate the militarisation of outer space (*Time*, 2 January 1983, 22-24).

and the US continued its refusal to recognise Soviet Union till 1933. It was Stalin (surely no saint) who first perceived the meteoric rise of Nazism as a grave threat to Europe and to the world and kept pleading with the contemptful European powers for a common front of resistance to it. If after his long and futile quest, Stalin signed the notorious "no-war pact" with Hitler in 1939, it was with the certain premonition of Hitler's real intentions and in order to gain time to prepare for another epic of resistance.

No doubt, after World War II, the Communist system was imposed on countries of Eastern Europe, which till today groan under Soviet domination. But it is also a significant but relatively little-known historical fact that tiny Austria did negotiate its way out of Stalin's grip and now continues to enjoy prosperity, freedom and security, while bordering on communist Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia and Hungary — all three countries, incidentally, could bear a grouse against it for their domination by the Habsburgs. The only "price" Austria was required to pay for Soviet withdrawal has been its status of "perpetual neutrality" — which has placed that country alongside Switzerland as the bridge between the two cold-war blocs[56] and the seat of such international organisations as the IAEA and UNIDO. And, according to a report, Austria spends 3 8 per cent of its annual budget on defence, while the West German percentage is 23, unemployment in Austria is 5 per cent, whereas is it 10.2 per cent in West Germany[57]

Speaking of Soviet domination and the threat of world communism, it is not pointless to recall that Yugoslavia successfully challenged Stalin as early as 1948 and that now, with the Soviet-Chinese relations as they are, talk of "world proletarian solidarity" and world communism can only invite a smile.

The purpose of these historical considerations is not to canonise the Soviet Union, but to expose the thesis of the Soviet and communist threat to peace and of their world domination as hollow, irresponsible and dangerous propaganda. If today the Soviet leadership, while championing the cause of peace and radical nuclear disarmament, is still competing with all its might in the arms race and has thereby demonstrated its choice to act on the compulsions of *realpolitik* rather than the demands of prophetical ethics, that contradiction calls for empathetic and intelligent understanding of the dialectical complexities of reality and its imperatives rather than cynical condemnation.

An entirely different, but, in my view, extremely relevant consideration is that Western Europe, which had remained war-torn all through its history of over a millenium and a half, when tribal, national and religious affiliations could easily ignite wars lasting for generations on end, and which was the scene of history's bloodiest internecine conflicts, did experience a tremendous inner healing and reconciliation after World War II. This European healing, which is now almost

56. Both SALT I and SALT II were negoitated and signed in Vienna.
57. *Publik-Forum*, 13 April 1984, 13.

taken for granted and, it looks to me, has more stuff to it than the fact of having a common external enemy in Soviet communism, would have been unthinkable in terms of the past. Precisely in this context the US bishops' historic pastoral comes again to mind with hope-inspiring poignancy:

"The Soviet people and their leaders are human beings created in the image and likeness of God. To believe that we are condemned in the future only to what has been the past of US-Soviet relations is to underestimate both our human potential for creative diplomacy and God's action in our midst, which could open the way to changes we could barely imagine.[58]"

But is not the Soviet Union compulsively driven by the ideology of world-conquering Socialism and is not the Soviet state and its totalitarian working system the necessary incarnation of this ideology ? This question must be squarely faced.

There is no denying the operative vision of universal socialism or communism behind the Soviet ideology and system. Neither have the Soviets ever cared to deny or conceal that fact. However, the communist universalist vision must be properly discerned and understood in its complexity as well as its relationship to the Soviet state and Marxist ideology in the strict sense.

Anti-Communist Christians often compare communism with Nazism and offset the evil genius of Hitler against that of Stalin, Mao and Pol Pot. This is, alas, facile, dangerous and due to prejudice and ignorance. Nazism was professedly and explicitly the ideology of the supremacy and domination of the "biologically superior" Aryan-German race over the rest of humanity, to be brought about by war and the physical liquidation of those who would resist or threaten it. As against this, those who know its ABC know that communism is the ideology of the emancipation of the oppressed and exploited, an emancipation that must bring about *not* the domination of any group or class over others, but universal emancipation reconciliation and integration. While acknowledging that this is not the place to dissert on the subject I must still take the freedom to cite three texts to substantiate this point.

The first text is from the now famous *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of* 1844 of the young Marx. In the young man's vision, communism in the genuine sense,

"as fully developed naturalism, equals humanism, and as fully developed humanism, equals naturalism; it is the *genuine* resolution of the conflict between man and man — the true resolution of the strife between existence and essence, between

58. *The Tablet*, 4 June 1983, 534.

objectification and self-confirmation, between freedom and necessity, between the individual and the species. Communism is the riddle of history solved, and it knows itself to be this solution."[59]

The second text is from Marx's and Engels' first joint work, *The Holy Family*. This text illustrates the Marxist meaning of "class struggle" and "historic task of the proletariat." It reads:

"Since in the fully-formed proletariat the abstraction of all humanity, even of the *semblance* of humanity is practically complete; since the conditions of the life of the proletariat sum up all the conditions of life of society today in their most inhuman form; since man has lost himself in the proletariat, yet at the same time has not only gained theoretical consciousness of that loss, but through urgent, no longer removable, no longer disguisable, absolutely imperative *need* — the practical expression of *necessity* — is driven directly to revolt against this inhumanity, it follows that the proletariat can and must emancipate itself. But it cannot emancipate itself without abolishing the conditions of its own life. It cannot abolish the conditions of its own life without abolishing *all* the inhuman conditions of life of society today which are summed up in its own situation. Not in vain does it go through the stern but steeling school of *labour*."[60]

The third text is from no other work than the *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, composed by Marx and Engels in 1847 which has remained the key document of the communist ideology. There we read, about the role of the proletariat and the communists in respect of society as a whole:

"When, in the course of development, class distinctions have disappeared, and all production has been concentrated in the hands of a vast association of the whole nation, the public power will lose its political character. Political power, properly so called, is merely the organised power of one class for oppressing another. If the proletariat during its contest with the bourgeoisie is compelled, by the force of circumstances, to organise itself as a class, if, by means of a revolution, it makes itself the ruling class, and, as such, sweeps away by force the old conditions of production, then it will, along with these conditions, have swept away the conditions for the existence of class antagonisms and of classes generally, and will have thereby abolished its own supremacy as a class. In place of the old bourgeois society, with its classes and class antagonisms, we shall have an association, in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all."[61]

One can fault the project set for in words as the above with being visionary, idealistic, but most certainly not with being sectarian in any way; to liken it to Nazism will be to sin against the light. This does not mean that Marxism is not partisan; it is emphatically so in society's given conditions of class divisions, class antagonisms and the oppression and exploitation of the vast majority by a small minority. But Christians who, if any group, should know the meaning

---

59. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1977, 97.
60. Progress Publishers, Moscow, 1975, 36-37.
61 These are the concluding paragraphs of section II of the *Manifesto*.

and importance of "vocation", "election", "mission", "preferential option" and the like must be cautious to say the least, in criticising the class partisanship of communism, as contained in its authentic concept.

However, the ideal is one thing, ideology and systems are quite other things — other, all the same, in a *relational identity*. This is what loyal partisans and critics should not, but most often do, forget. It is most important that when we criticise the working communist systems, with all their real and grave defects, we should not undifferentiatingly and globally condemn communism. Neither should we forget that the communist ideology itself is not absolute and immutable. As any working system is and can be only the defective realisation of an ideology, so the ideology is and can be no more than a defective and asymptotic reaching out to the ideal. And it is the natural tendency of man to excuse and condone, if not idealise, the system to which he is committed in terms of his ideology, and the ideology in terms of the ideal; conversely, to globally condemn the opponent's ideology and ideal in terms of the defects of his working system.

But neither is it the case, it looks to me, that the entire responsibility for this confusing globalisation and condemnation of communism by anti-communists must be blamed on the latter. Interestingly and ironically, while the Soviet leaders are rightly cut up by the way President Reagan demonises and damns communism, they hardly seem to realise that Reagan is only reciprocating their own demonisation and damnation of capitalism. The unredeemed condemnation of capitalism and the certain and practical expectation that it is going to disappear, sooner rather than later, under the "ash heap of history" is the first principle of the communist Good News being constantly dinned into the capitalists' ears. The communists, alas, do not seem to appreciate that, in terms of their own dialectical understanding of the historical process, socialism and communism are the fruits borne on the tree of capitalism; that the latter will not be overcome once and for all (any more than slavery could overcome primitive communism, feudalism could overcome slavery, and capitalism could overcome feudalism); that, as long as captalism and communism coexist, they must, in more ways than one, exist *in* and *for* each other.

As socialism and communism are borne by the tree of capitalism, so did capitalism bear such other fruits as Robespierre's terrorism, Napoleon's adventurism and Hitler's Nazism. Likewise, communists must recognise that, *dialectically and materialistically*, there grew on the tree of the post-revolutionary "dictatorship of the proletariat" (a

highly problematic concept in the Marxist family, a concept rejected for its inherent danger not only by present-day Euro-Communists, but also by such stalwarts as Rosa Luxemburg and Plekhanov), beside the very real emancipation brought about for the vast masses, such fruits as Stalin's paranoid terrorism and Pol Pot's demonic savagery. It will be neither consistent nor honest for communists to blame Robespierre, Napoleon and Hitler on capitalism as a system, while blaming Stalin's terrorism and Pol Pot's savagery on the evil inherent in their persons (something not quite in place in Marxism in any case).

The point I am trying to drive home is that no human system, no ideology, is either all evil or all good. It will be in their mutual interest as well as in the interest all humanity for the leaders of the United States and the Soviet Union, along with their ideologues, to do some radical rethinking and self-questioning in this hour when all seem to be summonned inexorably for the final reckoning; when we seem to be fated either to go up in the nuclear flames together or to rise together and, by a leap, find new horizons. One can only hope that humanity and wisdom will triumph over fanaticism and self-righteousness.

Notes

Among the Treasures of the Eastern Tradition

A few months ago Fr J. P. M. Van der Ploeg could at last see the fruit of much labour published. I mean his book entitled *The Christians of St Thomas in South India and their Syriac Manuscripts*.[1] The author is a Dominican scholar from Holland, retired professor of Holy Scriptures at the Catholic University, Nijmegen, and a specialist of the Old Testament. In the years after World War II he became interested in the Qumran discoveries and findings. His book on the subject is still one of the best introductions to that wonderful treasure trove. Together with another Dutch scholar he later published one of the Qumran manuscripts, a Midrash of the book of Job.

Fr Van der Ploeg is also one of the scholars who became involved in preparing the critical edition of the *Peshitta*, the 'common' or 'vulgate' Syriac translation of both Testaments It was one of the reasons that brought the Dominican scholar so often to Kerala, to find out whether there were Biblical manuscripts there which could complete the list found in the *Peshitta*. In the process he became a keen admirer and enthusiastic quasi-member of the Syriac churches He was one of the co-founders of the Dutch Association for the Eastern Churches, and its chairman for many years. His love for the Oriental church reached a climax when he was ordained a *chorepiscopa* in the patriarchate of Antioch for the Syrian Catholics.

During more than a thousand years Christians and their church in India were closely, often intimately, connected with the Aramaic, or Syriac, world. It had a language and a culture which, like Armenian, Coptic and Georgian, had been almost from the outset entirely Christian. The early church in Palestine and the Levant belonged to it. Syriac literature is one of the three or four sources of unique importance for the Christian faith. It is also the source of Christian hymnody, thanks, above all, to the exceptional contribution of St Ephrem.

Ancient, medieval, and even recent Christians of India, who belong to the Eastern Christian tradition, were strongly attached to Syriac and all that it represented. They felt, legitimately enough, that only the Syriac churches had really cared for their welfare. They also knew that through these churches they kept a living contact with the apostolic and patristic ages. These ages are fundamental and cannot be replaced or ignored. The spontaneous theological sense of these Indian Christians, their *sensus fidei*, taught them the importance of this living contact.

---

1. *Bangalore, Dharmaram Publications*, 1983. Pp xvii-301. Limbcover Rs. 35 ($ 7.00); hardcover Rs 45 ($ 8.00).

The passing of time, the moist climate of Kerala, the voracity of insects and the neglect of man, combined to make the survival of manuscripts very uncertain. Those factors are sufficient to explain why so few manuscripts written in Kerala before the 16th century have been found. Rather, one can wonder that so many have been preserved, and quite a number very well indeed.

Fr Van der Ploeg has written a catalogue of them, but not of the cut-and-dry technical type. He wanted to provide the reader with as much historical data as each manuscript could provide. It is well known that Syriac manuscripts often have colophons where the copyist offers information of much value. If a manuscript happens to consist of several items, each one may bring out unexpected data not found in the others. Van der Ploeg is not satisfied with covering the Kerala field but lists also the manuscripts of Kerala origin today found in the West. Hence, this is indeed a catalogue, but of special character. One can hope that, later on, an ordinary catalogue with the Syriac text in Syriac type, not in transliteration as it is done here, and with greater technical details, could be prepared and published.

The foreword is written by the archbishop of Trivandrum, Dr Benedict Mar Gregorios. It is fitting that the successor of Mar Ivanios, whose attachment to Syriac was so outstanding, should underline the exceptional importance of Fr Van der Ploeg's work. His foreword is followed by the bibliography, which is both succinct and to the point.

In the first chapter, the author covers the history of St Thomas Christians in 45 pages. This is not a mere repetition of past or recent books. It is a personal account, influenced by the reading of so many manuscripts described later in the book. The survey confirms certain basic historical truths which might well seem unpalatable to some prejudiced and unhistorical minds today. A case in point is the clear attachment of the Indian Christians of St Thomas to the Church of the East, the East Syrian Church. The way they were attached to that spiritual heritage looks almost frantic, and such an attitude lasted for centuries.

In this respect the author mentions (p. 15) the "law of St Thomas" which was "for them a holy heritage". It also included the connection, today so much deprecated by ill-advised people, with the Church of the East which sent its bishops to Kerala. "The fact that the Bishops came from abroad belonged to a constant and unalterable tradition: a desire for change did not even cross the minds of the Christians of Malabar."

Regarding the arrival in India of the West Syrian bishop, Athalla in 1652 (p. 25) it is said, as it was printed in my translation of Tisserant's *Eastern Christianity in India*, p. 80, that he was "cruelly executed" in Goa in 1654. Actually this never occured, and we know now, thanks to the discovery of the obituary (=book of the dead) of the old Franciscan friary of Paris, that Athalla passed away peacefully in that very friary, when on his way from Lisbon to Rome via Paris. Also, it must be said that the episcopal successor of Bishop Alexander Parambil, known as Raphel de Figueredo Salgado, was not really a

Portuguese, but an Indo-Portuguese of Bengal origin (p. 31). Fr Van der Ploeg brings in fresh information when he summarises the French report of Bishop Marion de Bresillac, the 19th century vicar apostolic of Coimbatore. It was published in the *Orient Syrian* in 1960, but passed almost unnoticed. It makes us aware of certain attitudes of the time towards the Thomas Christians (pp. 39-42).

The second chapter consists of another survey, this time of the Kerala manuscripts according to their contents. It is often combined with an analysis of them, following the comparative method. This gives an opportunity to the writer to make useful remarks on liturgical, doctrinal and other points. There he also speaks of his various contacts and visits. The exposé is divided into three sections: biblical MSS, East Syriac liturgical MSS, and, rather briefly, West Syriac liturgical MSS. In the first section there is a special subsection for the psalms, because of the special importance of the psalter in the Syriac tradition.

The third chapter covers *Libraries in Kerala;* It forms the core of the book. The distribution of places follows a more or less geographical order. The first to be mentioned is the library of the Syro-Malankara Archbishop of Trivandrum. Originally the private possession of Mar Ivanios, this library consisted of a combined manuscript and book collection. Since he became a Catholic in 1930, more manuscripts were acquired. Now there are 26. The oldest dates from 1734: it contains the East Syriac liturgical poetry with, in addition, the text of the book of Judith according to an unknown version (pp. 87-8). When describing a shorter form of a *Fenqitho*, the West Syriac Festival Office (p. 99), the author says that it does not contain any of the so-called priestly prayers. In fact, all the old Fenquitho MSS are like that. Those prayers are kept in a separate volume. On p. 56 the author had indicated that the Mar Ivanios College, Trivandrum, kept a manuscript of the four Gospels, dated 1563. He does not mention it again when speaking of Mar Ivanios library, nor does he note anything more about the college library.

The next library is that of the Catholic Syro-Malankara bishop of Tiruvalla. Thanks to various *malpans* and other clergy, who loved manuscripts in Syriac, this bishopric has a suprising number of manuscripts, 43, of which 42 are described here. The oldest is a ferial office of the West Syriac tradition, dated 1588, copied in the Middle East (pp. 101-3). One of the items is titled *beth-gazzo* (treasure house), a name often given to the handbook of liturgical tunes according to the 8-tone scale. But here (p. 108) it means a kind of ferial office, or *sh'imo*.

Mannam, the founding house of the C.M.I. congregation, has a fairly good library, well known to lovers of Kerala and of the St Thomas Christians. Its 14 most important manuscripts are described, the oldest being a Syro-Malabar office book of 1734 (p. 123). From there we move to Ernakulam, where the Syrian archbishop's house contains 5 manuscripts of importance. The others, e.g. a beautifully written copy of the Bar Hebraeus's grammar, are too recent and too

ordinary to be analysed. Among those 5, the oldest, dated 1563, is quite interesting. It is an excellent copy of the Eastern Syrian *nomocanon*, that belonged to the last Chaldaean metropolitan to live and die in Kerala, Mar Abraham, who added in the margin: "I am not a Nestorian".

Trichur, which became a Christian centre only by the end of the 18th century, can boast of two Syriac libraries. The less important one is that of the Syro-Malabar bishop's house. It owes its origin to the intellectual openness of Bishop A. Medlycott, who was the founder of the See and its first vicar apostolic.

The manuscripts described belong to the 19th century. The second library, one of the most interesting, is that of the metropolitan of the Church of the East. The present holder of the See is Mar Aprem, who is also the first Indian to be its prelate. Though the collection is fairly recent, it is quite valuable. Most of the existing 82 manuscripts are of Middle East origin. Fr Van der Ploeg is satisfied with describing 45, the rest being mentioned briefly for the sake of eventual scholarly needs. Nearly all of them belong to the East Syriac tradition. The most ancient item, from the Middle East, is a copy of the *nomocanon* of Abdiso Bar-Berika, of Soba (d. 1318), dated 19.5.1302. This means that it was copied sixteen years before its author died. The oldest manuscript copied in Kerala is an important witness to its liturgical life before Diamper and its latinizing aftermath had set in. It is a *Kaskol* (one of the 5 office books of the East Syrian liturgy), dated 1584, and from Kothamangalam.

Near Trichur, to the West, not too far from the seashore, there is a little place called Thozhioor-Anjoor, which happens to be the seat of a small independent church of the Jacobite persuasion. Its bishop's house has a small but valuable collection of manuscripts. The oldest to bear a date is from 1662. There is also a splendid copy of the *Treasure of Mysteries* of Bar Hebraeus, which may well go back to before the 16th century.

Dharmaram College is the intellectual centre of the C.M.I., the foremost Syro-Malabar religious congregation. For the last 20 years or so it has collected precious books and also some Syriac manuscripts, three of which are described here. One of them, no. 3, was given many years ago to Fr Placid Podipara, the foremost Orientalist of the CMI's, by a former Jacobite priest. It witnesses to the slow and often awkward change from the East Syrian to the West Syrian tradition in matters of sacraments and sacramentals (p. 157). The oldest of the Dharmaram MSS dates from 1731/1734; it is a *Kaskol* of 828 pages, with some West Syrian corrections and additions (p. 154-7).

The next two libraries visited by the author, in the Orthodox Seminary of Kottayam and the CMI monastery, Kuruvilassery (near Trichur), did not yield anything striking, in contrast with the library of the Konat Family Pampakuda, which I happen to know fairly well. Pampakuda is situated near Piravam, today a stronghold of the followers of the patriarch of Antioch (Syrian Orthodox). Yet Pampakuda is a faithful adherent of the autocephalous catholicosate. The library is private, and belongs to the Konat family, which rightly boasts of

an uninterrupted succession of Syriac *malpans* (teachers) for nearly 200 years and also of a bishop called Mar Julios. Local restrictions prevented Fr Van der Ploeg from having easy access to each MSS, and he lacked the leisure to describe them in detail. He succeeds in giving us a check list of 229 MSS, out of which at least 34 are of Middle East origin. All this shows that this library is by all standards the most important repository of such MSS in Kerala and, for that matter, in India. The oldest MSS is a copy of the *nomocanon* of Bar Hebraeus, made in the Middle East in 1290, i.e. four years after the death of its famous author, who is often regarded in Iraq as the Aquinas of Medieval times. It is clearly the oldest extant MSS of that important synthesis of canon law in the West Syrian tradition. The next oldest, a lectionary, goes back to 1433. There is also an interesting copy, dated 1672, containing about 56 or 57 *memre* of Jacob of Serug.

The next sub-section gathers some information about other, generally smaller, collections in private hands. A late friend of mine, Fr Thomas Arayatinal (d. 1980) of Arivithura, is mentioned as the owner of a few MSS, which are now kept at the library of the Paurastya Vidyapitham (St Thomas Apostolic Seminary), Kottayam.

Fr Van der Ploeg's study of the Syriac libraries in Kerala is concluded with three pages of remarks and discussions about the MSS mentioned and used by the late K. N Daniel to prepare his controversial book *A Critical Study of the Primitive Liturgies, especially that of St James* (Kottayam, 1937; 2nd revised and enlarged edit. Tiruvalla, 1949). The "not very common prayer of the priest" on p. 182, is, if I am not mistaken, actually the second part of the dialogue preceding the Eucharistic prayer proper. At any rate there should still be quite a number of MSS kept by families, particularly among the Syrian Orthodox. More investigation needs to be done locally.

The fourth chapter examines the MSS from Kerala which found their way to various European libraries The author reviews successively the Vatican Library, the Cambridge University Library, the Bodleian, Oxford, the Bibliothēque Nationale, Paris, and the University Library, Leiden. A few details may be mentioned. In the Vatican Library there are 17 MSS. One of them is the oldest Syriac MSS written in Kerala. It is a lectionary of St Paul's, dated 1301, from Cranganore. In Cambridge there are 27 Syriac MSS of Kerala origin. None of them is older than 17th century, and many are biblical. Most of them were bequeathed by Claudius Buchanan, the Anglican chaplain who visited Kerala in 1806. Among the 6 Kerala Syriac MSS of Paris one of them is particularly well described by Fr Van der Ploeg: the Par. Syr. 25, which is an East Syrian or Syro-Malabar ferial office with the psalter, and was almost certainly used by Bishop Alexander Parampil (de Campo) the first Catholic Syro-Malabar prelate. During the first years of the 18th century, a German Orientalist, C. Schaaf, who was professor at the Leiden University, corresponded with the Mar Thomas leader of the Independent Syrian Christians of Kerala. Almost all those letters are preserved at the Municipal University Library in Amsterdam. Fr Van der Ploeg made a point to catalogue them. I think that it is the first time that this is so well done.

Other libraries such as found in Rome, in Germany, and of course in Iraq, are mentioned briefly. In an appendix the author studies "Some Survivals of Ancient Pre-Portuguese Customs among the Christians of St Thomas in Kerala" (pp. 274-86): for instance, the Syriac words used in Malayalam, the solemn Eucharist called *razu* (mystery), the old churches, the music. The book concludes with 8 photographic illustrations of various significant manuscripts of Kerala. The index, so necessary in this kind of catalogue, is very well done.

In order to make it more easily available in India, Fr Van der Ploeg wanted his book printed by the press of Dharmaram College Bangalore. This had its drawbacks: for instance, the title of the manuscripts could not be printed in Syriac types. There is also a number of misprints. Most of them are corrected in a list of *errata* pp. 294-5, which, however, does not include all.

I cannot but insist again on the great value of this work. From many different angles; e.g. linguistic, historical, biblical and liturgical, it throws much light on the ancient apostolic community of Kerala. It will help us to improve our knowledge on many points, to clear doubts, and to correct not a few false ideas and prejudices.

E. R. HAMBYE, S J.

More "Classics of Western Spirituality"

VIDYAJYOTI has in the past three years commended this collection and given an account of 31 of its volumes on five different occasions (1980, 197-200; 1981, 344-347 and 503-507; 1982, 509-510; 1983, 357-358). Here we present six more volumes that deserve the same praise given to the earlier ones of the collection, a model of undertaking for its scholarly character, its ecumenical spirit and broad range of interest. We introduce the books according to the chronological order of their authors.

1. FRANCIS and CLARE. *The Complete Works*. Translation and Introduction by R. J. ARMSTRONG, O.F.M. Cap., and I. C. BRADY, O.F.M. Preface by J. VAUGHN, O.F.M. (1892. Pp. xvi-256. £ 9.50). The volume collects for the first time in English the writings and dictated writings of Francis and the letters, rule, testament and blessing of Clare. Although the Franciscan *Omnibus* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1981, pp. 99-100) contains a more complete collection of early Franciscan sources, the writings of Francis himself are more complete in this volume, which has the added advantage of including the writings of St Clare, ignored by the *Omnibus*. Besides it is a handier and cheaper book. The text translated is taken from the 1976 German critical edition by K. Esser for Francis and the 1970 edition of the works of Clare in the Spanish BAC collection. The 43 short pieces offered here breath the sure spirituality of early Franciscanism, so diaphanous and so steeped in the Gospel values and the love of God. The book is a source of joy in our spiritual reading.

2. JACOPONE DA TODI. *The Lauds*. Translated by Serge and Elizabeth HUGHES. Introduction by Serge HUGHES. Preface by E. ZOLLA (1982. Pp. xxii-296. £ 8.50). Jacopone is a Franciscan of the late 13th century, reputedly the author of the popular *Stabat Mater*. Although born in a noble family, he took to the life of uncompromising poverty and took the side of the Spirituals against the Conventuals in the early controversies of his Order. His *Lauds* is a collection of 93 pieces written in many occasions, ranging in mood from the satirical to the mystical ecstasy. Besides the praises of Lady Poverty and the exaltation of the love of God above all loves, the book contains sharp criticisms of the worldliness of the church and the unworthiness of Boniface VIII, who excomunicated and imprisoned the author.

3. MEISTER ECKHART. *The Essential Sermons, Commentaries, Treatises, and Defense*. Translation and Introduction by E. COLLEDGE, O.S.A. and B. MCGINN. Preface by Huston SMITH (1982. Pp. xviii-366. £ 9.50). Eckhart has a special fascination and interest for readers in India. His mysticism has often been compared to that of Śaṅkara (cf. already in 1932, Rudolf Otto in *Mysticism East and West*; and more recently, in 1982, B. Barzel, *Mystique de l'ineffable dans l'hindouisme et le christianisme*, see VIDYAJYOTI 1983, p. 560). We are happy to have a handy selection of the "essential" Eckhart, all the more so because good English versions of his work are not common. (There is a Hindi translation of a selection of 26 writings.) The selections contained here are taken both from his Latin works (his defence and Biblical commentaries) and his German writings (sermons and treatises). The collection is larger than the one published in the Fontana Library, which draws from the Latin rather than the German sermons. But there is a good deal of common ground between the two editions.

4. GREGORY PALAMAS. *The Triads*. Edited with an Introduction by J. MEYENDORFF. Translation by N. GENDLE. Preface by Jaroslav PELIKAN (1983. Pp. xiv-172. £ 8.50). Gregory Palamas' name is closely associated with the Hesichast tradition and the Prayer of Jesus which has become quite popular in recent years. In India there is a special interest in hesychasm because of its closeness to at least some aspects of the Yoga tradition, as noted already in the fifties by Monchanin and Cuttat (cf. THE CLERGY MONTHLY 1961, pp. 186-8) and studied more scientifically by Poli in *Yoga ed esicasmo*, Bologna 1981 (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1982, pp. 465-6). Gregory's book of the *Triads* is a defence of the "Holy Hesychasts" against the attacks by the Calabrian philosopher Barlaam, and an affirmation of the possibility of a personal experience of God. This volume, however, only gives us extensive excerpts covering 87 pages. For the full text and translation (in French) of the *Triads* one still depends on the work of Meyendorff in 1959.

5. FRANCISCO DE OSUNA. *The Third Spiritual Alphabet*. Translation and Introduction by Mary E. GILES. Preface by K. KAVANAUGH O.C.D. (1981. Pp. xvi-624. £ 12.50). Francisco de Osuna was a Franciscan from Southern Spain who, in the early sixteenth century wrote many reflections on spiritual life and discernment, arranged in

treatises each beginning with a letter of the alphabet, in the order of their sequence. Here we have the full translation of the "Third Spiritual Alphabet", a work that had a deep influence on St Teresa of Avila. The work of Francisco is a link between the older mystical tradition coming from Ramon Lull and van Ruysbroeck, and the Carmelite mystics in the latter part of the century. It comes in the midst of the controversy that rocked the Spanish church in the sixteenth century between the advocates of *dejamiento*, i.e. passivity in the spiritual life, leading to the movement of the *iluminados* on the hand, and on the other, those who advocated *recogimiento*, i.e. the spiritual effort and preparation for prayer. We know how the *iluminados* came in conflict with the Inquisition, and how Ignatius of Loyola, the Carmelite mystics, and Francisco himself before them, were rather inclined to the tradition of *dejamiento*. It might be of interest to compare this controversy with the traditions of *pravṛtti* and *nivṛtti* in Indian spirituality.

6. MENAHEM NAHUM OF CHERNOBYL. *Upright Practices. The Light of the Eyes*. Translation and Introduction by Arthur GREEN. Preface by S H DRESNER (1982 Pp. xiv-290. £ 9.50). Like *The Tales* of NAHMAN OF BRATSLAV in this collection (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1980 p. 200) we come with this work into the Jewish Hasidic spirituality as lived in Ukraine in the eighteenth century. Two works of Menahem are offered here: the short *Upright Practices* are really the practices of the Master collected and published by his disciples 19 years after his death. The second is a collection of homilies on Genesis entitled *The Light of the Eyes*. Of this work it has been said: "All its words are words of the living God, arousing the human soul to rise upwards, setting the heart aflame in service of the blessed Creator" (Levi Yizhak of Berdichev in 1798).

We are grateful to the Paulist Press of the USA and to SPCK of London for this collection that enables us easily to draw nourishment from many different spiritual traditions within the broad spectrum of what is called, somewhat inappropriately, "Western Spirituality".

G. GISPERT-SAUCH, S J

Continued from p. 536

last word in matters of doctrine and belief. Nor should we always need to find one or two scriptural texts as "proofs" of all doctrines, primary or secondary.

The book will certainly help the ecumenical cause to progress and us to understand in a deeper and freer way how far the Church, the councils, and the papal magisterium are infallible.

B. R. HAMBYE, S J.

Book Reviews

Sacred Scripture

The Passion as Liturgy. By Etienne Trocmé. *London, SCM Press*, 1983. Pp x-116 £ 4 95 (paper)

The sub-title: 'A Study in the Origin of the Passion Narratives in the Four Gospels' indicates the purpose of the study, viz "to reconstruct in part the tradition behind them" (p 4) or "the birth and growth of the story of the sufferings and death of Jesus" (p 26)

Part I The four Passion narratives (chs 1-5) The Gospel of Mark originally had no Passion narrative. Mk 14-16 is not the work of the same redactor as Mk 1-13; chs 14-16 are based upon a pre-Markan Passion narrative and were added to chs 1-13 at a later date — Matthew had at his disposal a copy of Mk including the appendix into which he inserted some additional material and gave it a better literary presentation Mt's narrative is of little help in the present study because of its close dependence on Mk The Lukan narrative is close to Mk except for some *important divergences, especially in the* use of vocabulary Arguing that Luke would not have made a choice between Mk and another Passion narrative, the author assumes that both Mk and Lk "derived from an archetype which had a firm structure, but remained quite supple as far as the details of the narrative are concerned. That archetype of the Passion narratives existed before the traditions used by Mark and Luke started diverging" (p 36). Lk does not seem to have known Mk at all.

John's narrative differs totally from the synoptic narratives in contents, character and style, leaving little evidence of the style and vocabulary of the documents used. A detailed examination of the various episodes in the narrative, leads to the conclusion that "the author of John's gospel used as his source for chs 11-20 a continuous Passion narrative that had exactly the same limits, the same narrative thread and the same stories as those used by Luke and the redactor who appended a story of the sufferings and death of Christ to the Gospel of Mark" (p. 46). The conclusion of the First Part is that there existed a common archetype from which the three traditions leading to the narratives in the canonical gospels were derived at an early stage.

Part II. The oldest Christian liturgy of all (chs 6-11) To account for the origin and nature of the archetype three hypotheses have been proposed, which Prof Trocmé rejects 1. 'A mere record *of facts' (ch. 6)* based on the memories of eyewitnesses — This is judged impossible, for just as any writing based upon records of facts, so the archetype of the Passion narratives must be based on a selection of facts known from various sources and chosen for reasons as yet undecided — 2 'A kind of *midrash*' (ch 7), viz "a collection of stories told *à propos* a number of Old Testament proof-texts foretelling the sufferings and death of the Righteous One, the Servant of the Lord or the Messiah" (p. 55) -However, since the crucifixion became quickly one of the themes of Christian preaching (cf Paul's letters and Acts) some kind of narration of the Passion would have been *an absolute necessity* Moreover, the allusions to the Suffering Servant and to the Psalms would not amount to *midrash* — 3. 'An expanded form of *kerygma*' (ch 8), viz "a crisp enumeration of facts with a few words of theological comment at most" (p 61) to which the growth of tradition would add little by little a number of stories concerning the events simply listed in the early summary of Christian preaching, the whole forming a continuous narrative — This 'allegory of growth' does not hold; the laws of development are not the same for a written text slightly enlarged, and the evolution of an oral tradition in the process of being committed to writing The reference in *1 Cor 15, 3ff goes to show* "that the early Christian *kerygma* was made up of a brief summary of the life, sufferings and death of Jesus .. followed by the mention of the resurrection and of its biblical foundations, as well as by a list of decisive christophanies" (p 65). Moreover, the differences in the stories of the christophanies found in Mk, Lk

and Jn are such as to exclude any conceivable common source

The next three chapters expose the author's own view. The analysis of the three traditions leads to the following conclusions (ch 9): 1. All the pericopae or sub-sections of pericopae which are common and are placed at approximately the same juncture were part of the archetype — 2 Pericopae or sub-sections of pericopae which occur in only one tradition must be regarded as later additions For Mk, however, it is not so easy to decide since there is little editorial material in Mk 14-16 — 3. Pericopae or sub-sections of pericopae that are found in two of the independent stories of the Passion are regarded as part of the original, (though the question might perhaps be left open) — According to this analysis a skeleton list is drawn up of the eighteen elements composing the original Passion narrative The *Sitz im Leben* for the original Passion narrative (ch 10) appears to be its liturgical use. As to the historical context of the original Passion narrative (ch 11) it is assumed that the Christian Passover liturgy and its megilla [prescribed reading] were in existence AD 40, in the Jerusalem Church, before "the brutality of the 'Hellenists' and the wide perspectives of Paul" turned the eyes of Christians towards the outside world and liberated the gospel from its Jerusalem fetters (p 89)

In the 'Conclusion' (pp 91f) the author looks at the main negative results of the examination. the literary problems of the four Passion narratives are not solved, the text of the original Passion could not be reconstructed, no details could be given about the liturgy in which the Passion was used; historical problems of the Passion remain unsolved, and no clear picture of the underlying theology/christology arises at the end of the investigation Positive results are a considerable help for the reading and interpretation of the Passion narratives because the original form of the narratives was a liturgical text used by the Jerusalem church within a few years of the actual events. Uniting ourselves with the worshipping early Church "Our understanding of the Passion narratives is bound to become deeper if, while retaining all our critical acumen, we join with the early Jerusalem Christians in their amazed contemplation of the sufferings and death of our common Lord, in their humble praise of God's saving act in Christ, in their assured hope of the resurrection of all believers. This, to my mind, is the chief contribution made by the present study" (pp 91f)

The book reads easily. Throughout the study the author points out the subjective element which unavoidably penetrates into any critical reconstruction of the origin of a text The unprofessional reader will do well to keep this in mind. The analysis of texts is objective and conclusions generally are acceptable while remaining in the sphere of hypothesis The abundant footnotes, mostly annotated, speak of the author's familiarity with the subject. Whether the positive results of the investigation as mentioned in the 'Conclusion', outweigh the negative ones the reader himself will decide

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Le partage du pain eucharistique selon le Nouveau Testament By X LÉON-DUFOUR *Paris Editions du Seuil*, 1982 Pp 380 FF. 75

The author, a believer whose faith has evolved into a deeper meaning of the Eucharist than he had before (p. 7), offers us in this study a Biblical theology of the Eucharist, the fruit of more than thirty years of reflection The traditional reading of the eucharistic texts was interested mainly in the question of 'how' the bread and wine are transformed into the body and blood of Jesus Christ In the context of those to whom these texts are addressed ('dialogue context') and what they produce in them (action) Léon-Dufour advocates the effective or operative ("*performatif*" p 151) character of the texts. The study consists of four parts

Part I: The Eucharist as practised by the early Christians: 'the breaking of bread' (ch. 1) and the Lord's Supper (ch 2), also the Gospel narratives of the Institution (ch. 3).

Part II. The Traditions of Jesus' last meal. Two traditions can be detected one 'cultual', a liturgical narrative; the other 'testamentary', a farewell address (ch. 4) In the cultual tradition we find two main orientations (ch. 5): i. Paul and Luke, called the Antiochian tradition; these authors alone mention the *anamnesis*; and separate the bread and wine by specifying 'after the supper'; ii. Mark and Matthew, called the Marcian tradition (Jerusalem or Caesarea) marked by a perfect parallelism in the formula 'this is .', and a Semitic vocabulary. — After these more general

observations the next chapters examine in detail the three basic expressions in the narrative: 1. "Do this in memory of me" (ch. 6). By this command Jesus wants the Church to reach back to its origin, Jesus, and through him to God. This remembrance of Jesus is dynamic Because of the contact with her Lord, the Church must express in her daily existence the life of Jesus on earth: love of God which is the foundation of love among men — 2. The words over the bread (ch 7). For a Semite these words would naturally mean "This signifies (or represents) my body", not in a 'determinative' sense (the transformation of the bread and wine), rather in a 'performing' sense, indicating what they 'perform' or accomplish in the believer through communion with Jesus. The text has also a symbolic meaning as food (bread and wine), Jesus' new presence as food and drink, produces in the believer the salvific effects of his death. — 3. The words over the cup (ch. 8). The words belong to the prophetic genre The fact that, contrary to custom, there is only one cup, signifies the communion of Jesus and his people — An attempt at reconstructing (hypothetically) the event underlying the eucharistic words, and the evolution of the subsequent tradition (ch. 9) concludes the section.

Part III: "The Presentations", or the various traditions of the Eucharist, (Mk, Paul, Lk and Jn, Mt has been left out except for some major points in which he differs from Mk). — The message of Mark (ch 10) is studied in the context of 1. the whole Gospel, 2 the narrative of the Passion, 3 Easter, 4 the text in itself. In this setting the Last Supper appears as an exceptionally important event in the Gospel narrative By declaring "this is my body" Jesus, fully aware of his imminent death, freely accepts it, and so makes the Passion already present. By giving himself as food he symbolizes the universal fruit of the new Covenant, in the light of the eschatological banquet — Paul and the Lord's Supper (ch. 11) in 1 Cor 10 and 11. Communion with the body and blood of Christ (10: 16f) establishes an intimate and personal bond between the believer and the Lord, which has also an ecclesial dimension In 11:23-26 we find the earliest narrative of the Lord's Supper and the Eucharist, to which Paul adds a reference to the proclamation of the death of the Lord, the source of our salvation and the new Covenant. This proclamation censures the divisions at Corinth. Paul's aim is directly pastoral, stressing the inconsistency of the Corinthians' attitude. The Eucharist ought to be normative in the Christian life — Jesus' testament according to Luke (ch 12) follows the pattern of the Testaments of the XII Patriarchs. There are two short (parallel) addresses to the disciples (Lk 22.14-18 and 21-23), separated by the cultual narrative of the institution of the Eucharist (vv 19-20) There follows an exhortation enjoining the disciples to live the intimate union of Jesus and the communicant, through a life of service (vv. 24-27), while looking forward to the eschatological glory (vv. 28-30) The 'testament' concludes with a premonition of forthcoming difficulties and tests (vv 31-38) — The Eucharist according to John (ch. 13) comprises the farewell discourse (Jn 13-16) and the discourse about the bread of life (6. 26-65), no trace of any cultual tradition. In chs 13-16 John stresses the obligation of the disciples to express in a life of love and service their vital union with Christ. For Jn 6, the bread of life, three possible approaches to the text are reviewed: 1. a spontaneous reading by a Christian who receives the Eucharist and who is sufficiently familiar with the Gospel; 2. a 'critical' reading might take Jesus' words in a metaphorical sense referring to faith in his mission Yet, since vv 51-58 have a eucharistic overtone, only a reading which accepts both notions of faith and Eucharist running together throughout the discourse will be 'Johannine', 3. a symbolic reading of the need of uniting sacrament and faith in Jesus, who sacrificed himself for the salvation of the world, and who in his absence is still present — A note is added considering "other 'eucharistic' texts" Cana (2 1-11), Jesus, the vine (15·1-5), and Jesus' meeting by the Lake of Tiberias (21. 9-13).

Part IV: "Opening" (ch. 14) indicates "the conditions for any sound reading of the eucharistic texts, and the way to understand the mystery" (p. 312): 1. the communitarian character of the Eucharist as God's gift to the Church; 2. the Eucharist as food to be assimilated for an 'existential commitment' in a Christian life of love in service and sharing (title of the book); 3. the relation between the Eucharist and the Passion, 4. the 'symbolic' character of the Eucharist: breaking the bread, sharing the cup, symbolize Jesus' gift of himself to the disciples and to all, uniting all in his person; etc.

The book ends with two appendices 1. Jewish solemn meals; the Supper and Jewish Paschal meal. — 2. A selected bibliography and a subject index.

This bare outline of the book may give some idea of the wealth of information it contains. For the benefit of the general reader points of method and procedure which might prove difficult are explained; occasionally the reader is cautioned against possible misunderstandings. The book demands attentive reading, but the effort is rewarding. One appreciates the sincerity and care with which the author exposes critical and historical problems, and seeks a plausible solution, also the discretion and reservations with which he proposes his own views, repeatedly underlining the hypothetical aspect of his interpretation

In a few instances, it seems to me, the approach could have been more critical, v g the reference to Cana (Jn 2.1-11), Jesus, the vine (Jn 15 1-5), Jesus' meeting with the disciples at the Lake (Jn 21 9-13) as "other eucharistic texts", or "the breaking of bread" (Acts) as a eucharistic practice, also the way in which the *anamnesis* is considered without discussing Lev 24 7, Num 1 10, Wisd 16 6 and Heb 10 3, instances of *anamnesis* in the meaning of 'reminding God' (see VIDYAJYOTI 48, 1984, 264ff)

May this book show to many readers the way to renew or stimulate their eucharistic life and its expression in their relations with others

J VOLCKAERT, S J

Doctrinal Theology

From Nicaea to Chalcedon A Guide to the Literature and its Background By Frances YOUNG *London, SCM Press Ltd.*, 1983 Pp x-406 £ 10.50

What kind of a man was Athanasius ? Was Cyril of Alexandria both a saint and a rogue ? Was Nestorius really a heretic ? What did the Monks of the Desert contribute to the Church ? Who was that peaceful man who lived in stormy times, Didymus the Blind ? The interested reader will find in this book well-balanced, argued and documented answers to these questions and a host of others that come from the turbulant period between Nicaea and Chalcedon

Frances Young has written a book that is both interesting and truly impressive in its scholarship. She shows a deep familiarity with the original texts, usually in Greek, and has done an amazing amount of study. Her notes and bibliography reveal that she has sifted all the relevant and latest material available. The book deals with the persons, the writings and the doctrines of the main figures of the period. It thus helps to fill out and put flesh into the events of the history of the time. In five very full chapters she takes us through "The Birth of Church history", with Eusebius of Caesarea, then moves on to "Athanasius and some Fellow Alexandrians of the Fourth Century". Chapter 3 covers the Cappadocians followed in chapter 4 by "Some Contrasting Characters of the Late Fourth Century" (Cyril, Epiphanius, Chrysostom, Nemesius, Synesius) and finally chapter 5 covers the literature on the Christological controversy

The book once again raises the question of how much women have to contribute to theology The answer is very much indeed ! This is a good book which every theological library should have Pastors who keep up with their studies will find it rewarding

Roman LEWICKI, S J

Schriften zur Theologie Vol XV Wissenschaft and Christlicher Glaube Vol XVI Humane Gesellschaft und Kirche von Morgen By Karl RAHNER *Zurich, Einsiedeln, Koln, Benziger*, 1983 and 1984 Pp 426 and 452 Each Vol DM 54.

Reviewing volume XIV of Rahner's *Schriften zur Theologie* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, 1983, pp 154 ff), I had put a question mark behind his prediction that probably no further volume of the *Schriften* would follow. In fact, the flow of Rahner's writing continued right until a few days before his death on the 30th March, 1984 In the preface to volume XV he comments thus. "If, beyond expectation, one is able to continue to work, and hence should do so, one may as well publish the results of such work, received as a gift."

The two volumes under review contain, like their predecessors, collected essays dealing with diverse questions put to the author as it were from outside. Starting with specific problems, the theologian is inevitably led into areas of ultimate relevance. Since these cannot be dealt with simultaneously a certain dissatisfaction with such a collection is inevitable. A clear syste-

matic unity cannot be expected in volumes of this nature.

The essays of volume XV are grouped under the headings: Science and, Theology; Faith; Christianity, Christian Life, Society of Jesus. Those of Volume XVI are grouped under: Human Society; Oikumene; Future of the Church; Doctrine and Magisterium; Spirituality and Devotion; Sacraments. It is of great interest to see how Rahner, in all of these essays, applies the main insights and emphases of his theology to the eludidation of particular problems. It is remarkable how, until the end, he retains that ability to pose bold and ever fresh questions, and how in the process he rescues forgotten truths from oblivion, and evaluates newly emerging trends. He appears throughout as a prophet and seer whose concern embraces not only the present but also the future global situation of the church and the world.

Here we can mention only a few of the significant trends contained in the essays of the two volumes. They pertain to systematic and pastoral theology and to the reflection on movements and trends in spirituality and devotion. Rahner thinks that Vatican II has opened up important new areas which demand close attention from the systematic theologian. LG 16 states, for instance, that even persons who "without blame on their part have not yet arrived at an explicit knowledge of God but who strive to live a good life" are not denied by divine Providence "the help necessary for salvation." In Rahner's view, the church has, with this and other statements about atheism and atheists, reached a milestone in the history of its consciousness of faith. It now enables her to lead a truly loving dialogue with all people in the world. But, has theology sufficiently reflected and made explicit the fact that human conciousness has, with regard to its insight and decisions, more dimensions to it than traditional scholastic theology would recognize? Has theology begun to point out concretely in which ways this is so? Developing this theme more fully would render a great service to Christian proclamation and to pastoral concern.

Another theological task, merely indicated by the Council's teaching, is to state more clearly that the universal episcopate is charged with ruling the church, and to clarify how this teaching can be put into practice effectively. It is the unambiguous doctrine of the church that there are legitimately two — however inadequately distinguished — subjects of the highest jurisdiction in the church. True, a fully satisfactory, totally unambiguous theological answer as to how these two instances, namely universal episcopate and papacy, relate to one another may never be possible. Yet, it is precisely this very impossibility to arrive at a fully satisfactory "distribution" of competences that must be more adequately appreciated as a fact which ecclesiology and canon law must take into consideration. The importance of the universal episcopate in and outside papal government must be brought out more fully. Such an endeavour would have important practical consequences, for example, regarding modes of appointing bishops, hitherto not yet envisaged, and regarding other ecumenically relevant areas of church structures and practices. A number of essays in these two volumes illustrate the way in which Rahner envisages afresh the important and abiding role of the papacy in the Christian church of the future.

The Council's clearly expressed hope of a truly universal salvation of the whole of humankind constitutes, in Rahner's view, another challenge to systematic theological reflection. By this hope, the church presumes a *bona fide* positive moral attitude, a graceful justification of *all* men and women, at least as a genuine possibility — all this in the face of the darkness and sinfulness of this age. In the light of such teaching, how can we conceive grace theologically? Is it adequate to think of it merely as a spatio-temporally limited event, effected from "outside" and "above", meeting the person at different points of time here and there? How to conceive of evil and terror in their stark reality, if God's universal design of grace is truly more than a phrase? How can true and real revelation and faith in revelation be conceived as operative outside the Abrahamic family of religions? The Council's remark that there are "many ways of salvation, known to God alone" does not theologically suffice.

Again and again, in these volumes Rahner draws ecumenically stimulating conclusions from his earlier developed basic theological positions. Three essays elaborate on the controversial theses put forward last year in volume 100 of *Quaestiones Disputatae* by him and H. Fries. Rahner elaborates further on the chief theses of that volume that "from the point of view of dogma and the faith

of the church, a unity of the hitherto still separated churches would be conceivable if no church states that a doctrine regarded by a given church as absolutely binding upon herself, is positively and absolutely irreconcilable with its own understanding of the faith." (Vol XVI, 101)

One of Rahner's chief preoccupations for the future of Christianity is how to conceive of a true theological and pastoral pluralism within the one world-wide Church. Where do we have to draw the line between a legitimate and an anarchical pluralism? In practice this question is often unresolved and left vague. How, for instance, can African theology have its unique character and simultaneously be a legitimate theology within the one church? "One presumably will have to admit", Rahner reflects, "that these different theologies in some respects will not be able to understand one another adequately. Because, if they could, we would have again a synthesis of several theologies — and thus there would no longer be a true pluralism. Hence, concerning the unity of canon law, theology, liturgy and the like, a tolerance must be practiced in the church whereby each one tells the other, 'In the final analysis, I do not understand you a hundred percent, and yet, you are my brother, and we belong to the same Church'" (Vol XVI, 182). There is, of course, the phenomenon of an "anarchical pluralism". It occurs "the moment a regional church, the church of a certain cultural area or a certain theology sets out to entrench and encapsulate itself in its specificity, and declares on principle that the other churches cannot and may not tell her anything" (*ibid.*, p. 183). Rahner here posits a crucial "rule of the thump" by which to discern the spirits: the loving openness, the will to learn from the other, to exchange with others, even if they appear strange at first and remain so to a certain extent.

It is impossible to convey an adequate idea of the rich variety of weighty pastoral themes Rahner creatively discusses in these essays, all of which belong to the two or three final years of his life: devotional confession; the parish; basic community relationship; the normative significance of popular religion; the urgent necessity for evolving a general pastoral plan for the future, etc.

Rahner again emerges in these essays as being first and foremost a spiritual writer. He pleads for a "new, nameless virtue for today", an attitude of the believer between the extremes of sceptical relativism and ideological fanaticism, in other words he pleads for the courage *to make decisions in the Spirit which* make sense and yet are not merely the product of rationality. He advocates "intellectual patience" with oneself in such "wintry times" as ours, in a situation shaped by the progress of knowledge in all of its dimensions and the consequent feeling in the private individual that he or she knows little and is unable to overcome the inadequacy of his or her knowledge (cf. Vol XV, 303 ff.)

The traditional forms of piety such as Eucharistic adoration, the devotion of the Sacred Heart and the veneration of Mary, in Rahner's view, not only retain today their importance but, properly understood and practiced, would seem to regain a new relevance. Discussing the content of the Christian idea of martyrdom, Rahner pleads for widening the traditional concept so as to include in it death incurred in the active struggle for Christian faith and its moral demands (including, naturally, *those concerning society*). This is a significant point, since its acceptance would mean an official church approval of such active struggle as would be worthy of imitation by Christians.

On the occasion of his eightieth birthday, Rahner summed up his life's objective in the following words: "If I have been able during my life-time to help the odd person a tiny bit to converse with God, to remember Him, to believe in Him, to hope and to love, then, I feel, life was worth the trouble." These essays of the last few years of his life leave us in no doubt: certainly, the lamented author's life was worth the trouble and we are left with a sense of gratitude, as well as with a living legacy and many a challenge to be pursued.

Christian W. TROLL, S.J.

Karl Rahner. An Introduction to his Theology. By Karl-Heinz WEGER. *London, Burns and Oates, Ltd*, 1980. Pp. vi-200. £ 7.95.

Our Christian Faith. By Karl RAHNER and Karl-Heinz WEGER. *London, Burns and Oates Ltd*, 1980. Pp. xi-179. £ 3 95 (paperback).

The Heart of Rahner. By Karl RAHNER. *London, Burns and Oates Ltd.*, 1980. Pp. 117. £ 2.95 (limp linson paperback).

Quite a number of weighty studies have been published on central aspects of Rahner's theology. K. H. Weger's

small volume is marked by the pedagogical virtues of a clear structure and lucid style. His aim is simply to help those who are embarking for the first time on a study of Rahner's theology and those who are not professional theologians. He deals with what must be regarded as the key areas of Rahner's thinking: the transcendental and anthropological method; theological anthropology; God, the absolute Mystery active in the world; grace and the supernatural existential factor, anonymous Christianity and God's universal revelation; transcendental Christology, faith and the Church. Obviously, the author had to be selective Yet, in this reviewer's opinion, Rahner's theology of symbol and sacrament, from which many of his important pastoral insights are derived, should have been presented adequately. This introduction will be helpful to students of Rahner in understanding more clearly his concepts, method and, perhaps most important, intention Suggestions for further reading in Rahner's own work, after each chapter, as well as a glossary of Rahner's key terms and an index at the end would have greatly enhanced the practical value of this publication.

Our Christian faith offers quite an original way of introducing the student and the lay person into theologizing in Rahner's footsteps The book was probably conceived by Weger who for some time has succeeded in presenting Rahner's insights to wider public and to relate the great theologian's teaching to the basic problems of the "new generation", a generation marked by a kind of existential frustration and resigned scepticism towards ideological systems in general and the Christian faith in particular.

The book tries to answer the crucial question: Can we live the Christian faith today with conviction and honesty ? Each chapter first formulates some of those basic underlying questions which burden many people today but are hardly ever asked, e.g. Why believe at all ? Is faith *certain* ? How much of what the church says must we believe ? In answer to such queries, presented in the light and mood of modern philosophical, sociological and psychological critique of religion and faith, Rahner's main theological teachings are brought out in a vivid, existentially gripping, and intellectually convincing manner. The text doesn't make for easy reading, but it is lucid and accurately translated and stimulates further personal theological reflection

In *The Heart of Rahner*, a brief anthology of carefully chosen, short theological and spiritual texts from Rahner's most prominent books and essays, John Griffiths has succeeded in leading the reader to the core of Rahner's reflection and prayer These passages also show how powerful and direct Rahner's style can be. The selection does not seem to follow a clear theological plan, nor are the references for each selected text indicated However, this slim volume does make available to a larger public some of the most inspiring and striking passages from Rahner's immense corpus of theological writing.

Christian W Troll, S J.

The Nature and Necessity of Christ's Church By Michael Richards. *New York, Alba House*, 1983. Pp. xvi-142 £ 7 95.

Fr Richards is head of the Department of Church History at Heythrop. Since 1967 he has been editor of *The Clergy Review* He also lectures on ecclesiology The book under review is essentially a developed essay on ecclesiology. R. begins his essay by showing how the Church (which for him means mainly the Roman Catholic Church) is brought into existence and kept alive by the action of the Word of God and the Spirit of God The Church flows from the personal relationship in which Jesus Christ is accepted as the Word of God. The Spirit is present and works in this relationship The community grows out of this basic fact Using the NT evidence R. goes into the implications and consequences of this. In his exposition he insists on the centrality of Christ. Different aspects of the mystery and the mission of the Church, the various biblical images to describe the Church and its relation to the Kingdom are dealth with. The essay also contains reflections on the Church and state, unity and ecumenism, etc. We have thus a very wide coverage of the field of ecclesiology.

Bishop Butler in his foreward to the book mentions that it "is less concerned with drawing abstract deductions from 'scientific' propositions about the Church than with examining the biblical images..." (ix). In theology, as in other literary fields, people's tastes vary. The present reviewer found the book still too much on the abstract side to be really gripping

- *that, however, is a personal gripe!*

Roman Lewicki, S J

The Emergent Church. The Future of Christianity in a Postbourgeois World. *By* Johann Baptist Metz *London, SCM Press*, 1981 Pp v-127

Johann Baptist Metz has often written and lectured on the challenges of Christian living, and the present work is an introspection into the heart of the Catholic Church in Germany. Among the German theologians Metz stands out as a person who realizes the significance of Latin American liberation theology for the whole church. The present work is a collection of his writings and lectures given on various occasions, and he calls it "a brief theological-political treatise on the future of Christianity". According to him the European church and especially the German church, is permeated with bourgeois values which run counter to the Gospel values. Instead of a change of heart the church is living under a dangerous illusion that a "*Believed—in faith*" is enough. "We do not love, but believe in love!" Even a tragedy like Auschwitz has not shaken the church out of its complacency. Instead, it is contented with paternalistic massive aid programmes for the Third World.

The Latin American phenomenon is calling the European churches out of their illusions to true Christian living. The Basic Christian Communities are examples as how Christian living can be effective in individual and societal transformation. As against the bourgeois human dignity which springs from the human capacity for domination and subjugation, the identity of the human being in BCC springs from his or her self-surrender and sharing. This is holistic and should be the character of postbourgeois Christianity. So what is needed is a second reformation of the German church towards the formation of Basic Christian Communities.

The author presents the German church as a very static community. Though there may be truth in calling it a "bourgeois church" such a name calling may miss the inner dynamism of the individual Christians of Germany. This evaluation of the German church has a lot of relevant messages for the Indian church, especially for the middle class Christian communities of Bombay, Mangalore and Kerala.

R. Athickal, S.J.

Infallibility. The Crossroads of Doctrine By Peter Chirico, S S *London, Sheed and Ward,* 1977. Pp *xxi-349 £ 9 50.*

The debate on infallibility which has been going on for some time goes much beyond the mere question of "papal infallibility", though this and the larger issue are intimately connected. It is often said that the definition of Vatican I is the greatest obstacle to the progress of the movement towards Christian unity.

Fr Chirico, a long-time professor of theology in the USA, has written a perceptive book. What is the philosophical content of infallibility? How does it relate to theology and to doctrinal statements? These and others are the questions which the author strives to answer, and to my view answers successfully. One should read this book without any theological prejudice. The author gratefully acknowledges his debt to previous writers on the topic, e g E Castelli, O Rousseau, J J. von Allmen, and G Thils. He is especially indebted to K Rahner and even more to B Lonergan.

When "infallibility" is predicated of a Christian belief, several conditions must be met: the belief must really represent the mind of the Church and be accepted by the Church, and not only by theologians. It should be transcultural and possess a universal meaning. Hence when a doctrine is declared to be infallible, it means that it enjoys a certain universal meaning.

Since infallibility is exclusively linked with a truth of universal significance, can it not be said that the pope would cease to be pope in case he would try to use his infallibility to promote a heretical teaching? Since in this case he would proclaim as universal Christian truth something that is not, that pope would *ipso facto* be deposed (p. 343).

What impresses me particularly in this treatment of a difficult subject is the author's systematic, clear and dispassionate approach. Nowhere do I find him carried away by criticism of other views. He keeps up a cool methodological analysis. In answer to the arguments brought against infallibility from history, either for not being an ancient doctrine or from the wavering of the Church about it, the author makes the reader realise that history is not the

Continued on p. 528

Cum permissu superiorum

Vidyajyoti

JOURNAL OF THEOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Vol. XLVIII DECEMBER 1984 No. 11

In This Issue

The meeting of the Indian Theological Association, to be held at the end of this month at Trichur, offers Fr Felix WILFRED an opportunity to study the model of "salvation history" so much used in modern theology as the hermeneutical key for Biblical interpretation. This model can be, and has been, taken in such a narrow sense as to separate "salvation history" from the rest of human history. This approach fails to have an impact on the real history and situation of the people today. Fr WILFRED contends that the situation of religious pluralism and of economic and social injustice of India requires we use also other, perhaps more existentical and more universal, models. Some of them may be inspired in the trends of Wisdom literature of the Bible itself.

The religious pluralism of India must not forget what in the Chotanagpur area is called the Sarna religion, the traditional forms of belief, worship and view of life developped by the tribal communities. Fr A. VAN EXEM shows that the holistic world view of the tribals is facing new challenges that need to be faced by the tribal community if it wants to remain faithful to its roots.

We publish also in this issue a summary and a commentary, by Fr S AROKIASAMY, of an important document from the Holy See. The document of the Secretariate for Non-Christian Religions on dialogue and mission has not provoked so much comment as the Instruction on Liberation Theology by the S. Congregation for the Defence of Faith (on which we hope to comment in the coming year). Yet what is said in this document on dialogue and mission may be significant for the Church in India.

VIDYAJYOTI whishes all its readers and well-wishers God's blessings for a very Happy Christmas and a Bright New Year.

A Matter of Theological Education

Some Critical Reflections on the Suitability of 'Salvation History' as a Theological Model for India

Fr Felix WILFRED*

THEOLOGICAL Education is the theme that will be taken up for study and reflection when the Indian Theological Association will gather for its annual meeting at Trichur from 28-31 December 1984. The relevance of the theme needs no comments, Certain amount of critical reflections have already been made on the present system of theological education, and ways and means have been suggested to make it respond to the manifold problems and challenges of today. In this context, exposure programmes, change of life-style, inculturation, etc., have assumed great importance.[1]

Praiseworthy as they are, such efforts, I am afraid, may not bear fruit unless we also at the same time critically examine certain basic assumptions that underlie the theological system. One such assumption is that the *whole* Bible can be read and interpreted through the category of "salvation history". Salvation history has become a widespread theological model after Vatican II, and it enjoys great respectability in our seminaries and centres of theology. It is worth noting in this connection that a highly influential series of systematic theology meant as a text-book bears the title: *Mysterium Salutis — Theology in the Perspective of Salvation History.*[2]

What adds to the respectability of the salvation historical orientation is the fact that it is invoked by many schools of thought. Not only the school which explicitly goes under the name of "salvation history", but several theological and biblical trends in contemporary times, such as the neo-orthodox, conservative, existentialist, historico-critical

*Fr Felix WILFRED is Professor of Systematic Theology at St Paul's Regional Seminary, Tiruchirapalli. His last contribution to VIDYAJYOTI was in August 1983

1 The CBCI Commission for Seminaries (Commission for Clergy and Religious) has taken commendable initiatives in this line: *Inculturation in Seminary Formation*, ed by P FERNANDO, Pune 1980; and *Socio-Pastoral Dimensions of Priestly Formation*, ed. also by P FERNANDO, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra, Indore, 1984, incorporating the papers of a consultation on socio-pastoral formation in seminaries organized jointly by the Commission and a few other agencies

2 *Mysterium Salutis, Grundriss heilsgeschichtlicher Dogmatik*, ed by J FEINER-M. LÖHRER, Benziger Verlag, Einsiedeln 1965 (translated into many languages).

schools, have in one way or another appealed to the idea of salvation in history to reinforce their own points of view. Thus, as James Barr, rightly observes, salvation history has become "like the great tree in Nebuchadnessar's dream, under which all the beasts of the field find shadow."[3]

This essay is an attempt to study critically the theological model of salvation history and its implications, and to examine how much it can respond to the challenges posed by religious pluralism and the situation of poverty and oppression in India today.

The Background of a Theological Model

In the classical Roman period, history was considered primarily from the view-point of the lessons it could impart to the present generation One spoke of history as *magistra vitae* — teacher of life. Change and progress were not yet associated with the idea of history. It was only in the nineteenth century that a new sense of history and a new historical consciousness were born along with the emergence of the so-called *Geistwissenschaften* — sciences of the mind.[4]

The new historical consciousness represented a serious threat to the static, substantialistic and dogmatic formulas and propositions in which the Christian faith was articulated and transmitted. For the Catholic theology, the new historical consciousness was one more enemy against which it had to raise its apologetic weapons, and it did fight a vehement battle against the danger of relativism and subjectivism the new orientation was believed to contain.[5] The Protestant theology, instead, faced up to the challenges of the new historical consciousness, harnessing it for a critical study and interpretation of the Bible. The religion of history school which emerged as a consequence of it, laid bare through positive studies and analyses the cultural conditionings of the biblical religion and pointed out the historical evolution it had undergone. This positive approach seemed to be wanting in theological and religious sense, for the elements of transcendence and revelation appeared to have been absorbed and drowned

---

3. J. BARR "Revelation in Old Testament and in Theology", in *New Theology* No. 1, ed. by M E MARTY-G. PEERMAN, Macmillan Company, New York 1967, p. 62.

4. The pioneers in this field were F. D. E. Schleiermacher and W. Dilthey. They expounded the idea of historical consciousness in relation to hermeneutics. Cfr G GADAMER, *Truth and Method*, Sheed and Ward, London 1975, pp. 192 ff.

5. Cfr F. MUSSNER, *Geschichte der Hermeneutik von Schleiermacher bis zur Gegenwart* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte Vol. I 3C 2 Teil), Herder, Freiburg 1976 ; J. BEUMER, *Theologische Method* (Handbuch der Dogmengeschichte Vol. I Fazikel 6), Herder, Freiburg 1972; Y. CONGAR, *History of Theology*, New York, 1968; W. KASPER, *The Methods of Dogmatic Theology*, Ecclesia Press, Shannon 1969.

in some biblical historicism[6] Such a situation called for an approach which, while taking full account of the sense of history, would at the same time provide a theological key to interpret and understand the whole Bible. It was thus that the idea of salvation history came to be proposed as a unitary and general interpretative biblical principle. We should not forget the fact that this category was closely allied to the philosophy of history as promoted in the idealistic circles of the nineteenth century.

The use of salvation history as an interpretative motif for the whole of Bible owes its immediate origin to J C.K. Hofmann[7] (1810-1877) who, in his turn, was very much influenced by the Hegelian philosophy of history. The Hegelian idea of history as a process of development moving towards a goal was applied to the Bible whose various parts were interpreted as stages of a historical process tending to some fulfilment.

We should readily acknowledge that the perspective of salvation history did contribute to overcome the rigid dogmatism that characterized the theological thought from the time of the Enlighterment and the biblical fundamentalism that was devoid of every sense of history. In the two or three decades immediately preceding Vatican II, the salvation historical thinking, which was gaining ground in many Protestant theological circles, exerted its influence also on some currents of Catholic theology –currents which would later determine the over-all direction of Vatican II.[8] It is significant that Oscar Cullmann, an outstanding exponent of salvation history among the Protestants was invited to be an observer at Vatican II.[9] The ushering in of salvation historical thinking into Catholic official teaching meant the acceptance of a biblical interpretation more sensitive to history that had been resisted

6 Cfr K STENDAHL, art "Biblical Theology (contemporary)", in *The Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, Vol. I, Abingdon Press, Nashville-New York 1962, pp 418-432, W E. RAST, *Tradition History and the Old Testament*, Fortress Press, Philadelphia 1972.

7. J C K HOFMANN, *Weissagung und Erfullung im Altem und Neuen Testamente* (1841-1844). Cfr also K. G STECK, *Die Idee der Heilsgeschichte. Hofmann-Schlatter-Cullmann*, Zurich 1959. The Germs of a theological system based on salvation history can be identified in the covenant theology as proposed by J. Coccejus (1603-1669). Cfr also R. BULTMANN, "Prophecy and Fulfilment", in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* ed. by C. WESTERMANN, John Knox Press, Richmond 1964[4], pp 50-75

8. Cfr J. W. O MALLEY, "Reform, Historical Consciousness, and Vatican II's Aggiornamento", in *Theological Studies* 32 (1971) pp 573-601; A AUBERT, *La théologie Catholique au milieu du xx[e] siècle*, Tournai 1954, C. GEFFRÉ, *Un nouvel age de la théologie*, Les Éditions du Cerf, Paris 1972; R. V. GUGHT-H. VORGRIMLER, *Bilan la théologie du xx[e] siècle*, vol I, Casterman, Paris 1970 (specially the contributions of R. AUBERT and J. COMBLIN, pp. 423ff).

9. O CULLMANN, *Christ and Time*, SCM Press, London 1965. Id., *Salvation in History*, SCM Press, London 1967.

for long in the anti-Modernistic climate, and the recognition of the possibility of growth and development in faith and doctrine.[10]

More than one Model

The use of salvation history as *the* interpretative key to the Scripture on the assumption that this motif is all-pervasive, has to face up to a difficult question that arises from within the Scripture itself: the Sapiential or Wisdom books of the Bible (Proverbs, Job, Ecclesiastes, Sirach and Wisdom) present quite distinct characteristics from the rest of the Old Testament and they hardly lend themselves to be classified under salvation history. For, concerning Wisdom one may not speak of any salvation taking place through words and deeds mutually interconnected. In this sense, Wisdom is totally different from the event-full Exodus. Not everything in the Bible can therefore be reduced to the category of salvation history.

Neither may one consider Wisdom as an isolated piece and an exception to the over-all salvation historical pattern prevalent in the Scripture. The contemporary biblical studies have made it clear that Wisdom cannot be considered an isolated strand of thought confined to a few books, but that it can be discerned all through the biblical, tradition — in the Davidic-Solomon traditions, among the prophets, in the Deuteronomic movement, etc.[11] Another example would be the story of Joseph narrated in Genesis 37-50 which seems to form an independent whole mirroring the Wisdom thought.[12] In this narration the Wisdom movement promoted in court at the time of the monarchy and oriented to the training of wise administrators is clearly reflected.

It is interesting to note that even G. Von Rad, a very staunch advocate of salvation history, who wrote an Old Testament Theology in this perspective, was forced to temper his position when faced with the difficulty of fitting the Wisdom literature into the schema of salvation history.[13] In fact, in a later study entitled "Wisdom in Israel" he

10. In the Conciliar deliberations there was a tension between the orientation marked by the fear of Modernism and the orientation which underlined the historical character of faith and revelation. This tension became evident right from the beginning of the Conciliar discussions. Cfr *Commentary on the Documents of Vatican II*, Vol. III, ed. by H. VORGRIMLER, Burns and Oates, London 1967, pp. 155ff

11. Cfr J. CRENSHAW (ed.), *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, New York 1976; R. MURPHY, "Assumptions and problems in Old Testament Wisdom Research", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 29 (1967), pp. 407-418; D. F. MORGAN, *Wisdom in the Old Testament Traditions*, John Knox Press, Atlanta 1981.

12. Cfr G. von RAD, "The Joseph Narratives and Ancient Wisdom", in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, (see note 11), pp. 439-447.

13. G. von RAD, *Wisdom in Israel*, SCM Press, London 1972; Cfr also F. F. BRUCE, "The Theology and interpretation of Old Testament", in *Tradition and Interpretation*, ed. by G. W. ANDERSON, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1979, p. 404; W. ZIMMERLI, "The Place and Limits of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology", in *Scottish Journal of Theology* 17 (1964) pp. 146-158. This is a reply to G. E. Wright who questioned the place of Wisdom literature in biblical theology.

admits that Wisdom literature represents a different theological approach, closer to the theme of creation.

Wisdom thought, we should further observe, can serve as a corrective to certain implications of the salvation history model. The salvation historical interpretation of the Bible has, for example, given rise to a kind of dichotomic thinking in theology whereby natural and supernatural, nature and history, sacred and secular, revelation and reason, have been polarized.[14] Such a dichotomy is contrary to the holistic vision of the Bible, especially of Wisdom which, with its universalistic character, reaches out directly to man, his life and destiny The Wisdom movement which is present all through the Bible should be seriously considered in today's multi-religious context as an opening point for a fruitful inter-religious dialogue.

What does all this mean to the question we are dealing with ? It means that a single category cannot claim to be the only theological and normative axis around which the rest of the Biblical tradition and material should revolve. There is a plurality of models and they all need to be taken into account in their role of mutual complementarity Hence salvation history is to be considered one among the Old Testament models, though the attention it has received might make it appear as the only one.

Are the linear and cyclical concepts of time opposed to each other ?

It is common among theologians and biblical scholars to contrast the biblical conception of linear time and history with the cyclic view of other peoples. The salvation history has exploited this contrast to drive home the point that only the Judeo-Christian history is a purposeful history in the sense that it contains the idea of progress and is directed to a goal or *telos*. The Judeo-Christian religion is said to be the "religion of history", whereas the others are called "nature religions".

The first application of this contrast is to the Greek conception of time. It is maintained that the Greeks conceive time as recurrence. with the result that all novelty is excluded. The other peoples and religions, be they ancient Near Eastern or Indian, are said to follow the pattern of the natural and cosmic repetition of time (seasons, day and night etc.,) and accordingly conceive history as no more than an eternal return symbolized by the rotating wheel.[15] This type of contrast, given wide currency, is also used as an explanation of the differences

14. D F. MORGAN, *op cit.* (note 11), pp. 14ff

15. Cfr M ELIADE, *Cosmos and History: The Myth of the Eternal Return*, Harper, New York, 1959.

in economic conditions. The prosperity and the scientific and technological advancement enjoyed by the West are attributed to the Judaeo-Christian conception of history as a dynamic reality, whereas the poverty of the nations of the Third World is said to derive from their cyclical understanding of history, devoid of any progressive movement.[16]

It is important to critically examine the truth of such sharp contrasts and sweeping generalizations. First of all we should note that this kind of oppositions and categorizations reflect almost total ignorance of the religions of other peoples and their conception of time and history, and are inspired by an excessive preoccupation to underline something distinct in the biblical tradition. If the Greeks spoke of history as recurrence and as *anacyclosis*, this did not mean that they lacked the sense of history or that flight from history —*fuga mundi*— was advocated by them, but rather they were trying to "put intelligibility into historical change and thus equip men for action."[17] This is the case when Polybius deals with the cycles of governments. Within the Greek thought itself, there were such different ways of understanding history each one with its own shades and nuances, that to label all of them as 'cyclical' would not correspond to truth. As for the ancient Near Eastern peoples, Albrektson in an excellent study has shown that the conception of history among them, with its 'undulations' of success and failure, fortunes and misfortunes, growth and decay, rise and fall, cannot be reduced to a mere cyclical view.[18]

As for India, the stress on salvation history with its sharp contrast between linear and cyclical view of history has also lent support to the traditional prejudice that, lacking such sense of history, India is not concerned about earthly realities. This prejudice stems from popular views and from misconceptions of certain scholars like Schweitzer and Heiler about time and history in the Indian tradition.[19] They seemed to be based on the choice of certain classical texts, to the neglect of others which give a different picture.

The Indian tradition manifests a very dynamic sense of history, a tremendous passion for life, and a relentless pursuit of wealth, it exalts war and victory and sings the praises of princes and heroes in

---

16. Cfr S. RAYAN, "Models of History", in *Jeevadhara* 13 (1983), pp. 5-26.
17. G. W. TROMPF, *The Idea of Historical Recurrence in Western Thought*, University of California Press, Berkeley-Los Angeles-London 1979, p. 112.
18. B. ALBREKTSON, *History and the Gods, An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events and Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel*, London 1967.
19. Cfr S. RADHAKRISHNAN, *Eastern Religions and Western Thought*, Oxford University Press, Delhi 1940².

battle.[20] This progressive sense of history is evident in the Rigveda The Bhagavad Gitā (the song of the Lord), the spiritual treasure of Hinduism, has as its background the battlefield of Kurukshetra where two opposing camps are drawn up for a battle, and the book lays stress on the path of action and involvement.[21] The India of the Middle Ages excelled in art and science, and abounded in business and in economic prosperity. To maintain, therefore, that the Indian tradition is world-denying or that it is wanting in a progressive sense of history would be a gross distortion of truth.

What we have said leads to the conclusion that if the idea of 'cyclical' history means a history without meaning, a repetition of certain models without purpose and direction, then such concept certainly cannot be applied to the Indian world-view and tradition, nor can it be contrasted with the understanding of history as it is found in the Bible.

On the other hand, in the biblical tradition and in the early Patristic tradition as well, we have many instances where history appears to be a repetition of past events, institutions and figures. Thus, for example one speaks of new exodus, new covenant, new David, new Moses, by which the present is seen as a recurrence of a previous model and the current events are looked at as re-enactment of past events. Such motifs can be found throughout the Bible and other Jewish literature, and among some Fathers.[22] In later Judaism, the return of Elijah was a dominant theme The eschaton was conceived as a new realization of a previous model and the end of time and history was portrayed as the re-establishment of what was in the beginning (*apokatastasis*),[23] It is a return to the paradise.

The end of history as a restoration of the ideal primordial state is seen particularly in the apocalyptic literature of the Old Testament Liturgical celebrations — covenant festivals or any other festival for

20 Cf A. L Basham, *The Wonder that was India*, Sidgwick & Jackson, London 1954. Id , (ed) *A Cultural History of India*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1975; K. Luke "Terrestrial Realities: The Tradition of the Aryans", in *Jeevadhara* 8 (1978), pp. 159-180.

21. Cfr S Rayan, "Indian Theology and the Problem of History", in *Society and Religion*, ed by R W Taylor, CLS, Madras 1976.

22. There are different opinions on how typology should be understood. Cfr J. Danielou, *From Shadow to Reality, Studies in the Biblical Typology of the Fathers*, Burns and Oates, London 1960; W Eichrodt, "Is Typological Exegesis an Appropriate Method ?" in *Essays on Old Testament Hermeneutics* ed. by C. Westermann, (see note 7), pp. 224-245; cfr also L Goppelt, *Typos. The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament in the New*, W. B. Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1982 (a recent English translation of the German original published already in 1939).

23. Cfr A. Oepke, 'Apokatastasis', in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, Vol. I, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, 1964 pp. 389-393. This was a favourite theme of Origen.

that matter — were actions which transposed the past into the present and bridged the time-gap between the two in a real and experiential way. Recurrence of the past, real, not fictional, was engendered by the identity of context. Two events became identical due to identical psychological contents. The escape from Egypt during the time of Moses and the return from Babylon during the time of Cyrus had identical psychological contents; hence 2nd Isaiah spoke of a new Exodus, not in a metaphorical or poetic sense, but in a real sense in as much as the Exodus from Egypt occured again in the Exodus from Babylon.

Even in Luke who is often presented as a champion of the idea of salvation history and of linear time, we find clear indications of a conception of history after the recurrence model. In fact, Luke sees the history of the Apostolic Church as a recurrence, a re-enactment of the events of Jesus' life. This is perceptible in the way Luke-Acts are structured and the events narrated. It may not be difficult to see how the death of Stephen is patterned after the death of Jesus, the release of Peter from prison after the apparitions of the risen Lord, the farewell speeches of Paul after Jesus' discourses at the Last Supper, the journeys of Paul to Jerusalem after those of Jesus to Jerusalem.[24]

What we have said above not only shows that the contrast between linear and cyclical time as assumed by the salvation history school does not correspond to truth, but also that there is a very important thought-pattern running through the Bible, namely the recurrence of models, which the theology of salvation history seems to have neglected.

An exaggeration of the linear conception of time purported to be that of the Bible has contributed to alienate man from nature and creation, which follow a cyclic and recurrent movement. Nature and creation with their proper characteristics are integral part of the biblical vision. The neglect of the cosmic dimension and the overemphasis on history are showing up their effects in the present day antagonism of man to nature. Human development is achieved by means of the exploitation of nature through technology, with the result that the natural environment indispensable for man's survival and harmonious growth is being lethally polluted and wantonly destroyed.[25] Today the place of nature and creation in the understanding of man and history needs to be regained. What is labelled as 'cyclical' is not

24. Cfr G. W. TROMPF, *op. cit.* (note 17), pp. 116ff.

25. The roots of the contemporary situation have to be traced back to the beginning of the modern period in the Western philosophy, in Descartes' opposition between *res cogitans* and *res extensa* and Bacon's understanding of science as re-establishment of man in his dominion over nature. In the words of Descartes, man has to become "master and possessor of nature". Cfr J. MOLTMANN, *The Future of Creation*, SCM Press, London 1979, p. 128.

something to be thrown overboard but to be integrated within the holistic biblical and Christian vision of history. The cyclical understanding of time and the world is neither against progress nor against science. On the contrary science today is rediscovering the cyclical dimension.

> The cyclical conception of the Universal process is not, as is sometimes said, anti-scientific On the contrary, the notion of a pulsating universe, beginningless and endlessly expanding, is one of the models under discussion in contemporary scientific cosmology. It could turn out that the balance of cosmological evidence and argument will point to the "big bang" being unique or to its being one of a series, perhaps, an infinite series, of movements of compression between contractions and expansions. But science as such does not depend on a 'linear' as opposed to 'cyclical' conception of the process of the universe.[26]

Are the Fathers advocates of salvation history ?

The impression is sometimes created that the theological model of salvation history is as old as the early Church. It is true that the Fathers frequently spoke of *oikonomia* or divine disposition. But a theological system with salvation history as a single unifying principle cannot be attributed to them. They were concerned rather about the progressive education of the people (divine pedagogy) as the disposition of God, his ordinance and economy.[27] Rightly then in interpreting the Scriptures they were keen on passing from brute facts and events, letter and law, to the realm of the spirit. This rich thought of the Fathers cannot be imprisoned and encapsulated within the salvation history pattern where events seem to dominate.

We find a certain emphasis given to history in the thought of a man like Irenaeus. But we should hasten to add that his attention to history was dictated by the preoccupation to safeguard the reality of the events of Jesus' life against the gnostic tendency to adultarate them through the admixture of myths, and to belittle their significance. Irenaeus, however, cannot be brought in as an advocate of the use of history as a category to unify the whole of the Biblical message. Classifying the materials of the Old Testament and the New Testament under history does not seem to be the concern of Irenaeus.

The Patristic concept of economy did not refer primarily to the events of Israelite history and of the life of Jesus. For the Fathers, *oikonomia* had a much wider connotation than historic events. These

---

26 J HICK, *God has Many Names*, The Macmillan Press, London-Basingstoke 1980, p 92.

27. Cfr H DE LUBAC, *Histoire et Esprit, L' Intelligence de l'Écriture d'après Origène*, Aubier, Paris 1950, specially pp. 146ff; ID., *L'Écriture dans la Tradition*, Paris 1966.

were expressions of something deeper. There is a basic disposition or *oikonomia* within the Godhead itself according to which there is a Father, a Son and a Spirit, and the creation and redemption are extrapolations and manifestations of this internal economy of the Godhead.[28]

Speaking of the Father's position on oikonomia, we must distinguish the two orientations represented by the Greek and Latin traditions. The Latin tradition — Tertullian, Cyprian, Augustine — start from Christ and his redemptive mystery, and go on to speak about the membership in the Church. Nature, creation, the fall and the like are brought into the picture only to highlight the redemptive work ot Christ.

Compared to this particularistic view, the position of the Greek Fathers, especially Gregory of Nyssa, is much more universalistic. The Greek tradition starts from God and interprets man and the whole humanity as the image of God. Salvation and redemption are viewed as the restoration of that image and as the attainment of beatitude through a continuous process of ascent to union with God. In the very process God's grace is operative and co-operative. The mystery of Christ is placed within this framework. The life, suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus and the sacramental system are seen as realities helping man to free himself from the bondage of sin, and leading him progressively to salvation — the restoration of the image of the divine in him. There is no place here for 'Christomonism', for everything is seen in terms of the relation between God and man, and the mystery of Christ is interpreted in this light.

For the Eastern Fathers, universalism is not a generalization of what is particular. Universality is not an extention-progress of particular events. They rather start off from a universalistic perspective and, having the salvation of whole humanity as their central concern, interpret the particular biblical events of salvation accordingly. Such an inclusive and universalistic approach can open new avenues for an appropriate theology of other religions and lead to a greater appreciation of the wide varieties of religious experiences of humanity.

In this vision, creation occupies a very important place and this is not foreign to biblical thought itself. The fact that the Israelites came to understand God as creator subsequently to their historic experiences of God's saving deeds — the Exodus events — does not

28. Cfr J. N. D. Kelly, *Early Christian Doctrine*, Adam & Charles Black, London 1977 pp. 110ff.

mean that the creation itself is of secondary importance. This, regrettably, is the impression conveyed by the salvation history school with its focus on events. Because of the predominance of the model of salvation history, there has taken place in the Christian theology of recent decades an eclipse of the idea of God's creation, his relationship to the whole of human family, and his universal economy.

Beyond Promise and Fulfilment

We should examine closely the model of salvation history particularly in its references to the New Testament. The theological models will differ according to the approaches to the Bible and its interpretations. The theological model of salvation history has 'prophecy and fulfilment' as the schema for its interpretation of the Bible.[29]

There can be a simplistic way of understanding prophecy and fulfilment: the prophetic words and the events of the Old Testament are said to find their fulfilment in the New Testament. It must be pointed out that the early Church, contrary to the general impressions, did not interpret the Christ-event as fulfilment by adducing *proof*-texts, in the way one would today quote from authoritative sources to establish one's position. Were this the case, the Old Testament texts would be cited with scrupulous fidelity. Instead we find that when the New Testament authors quote the Old Testament they take the liberty of modifying the text and introducing editorial comments into it so as to make it suit the present reality. To obtain the same effect, two or three quotations are sometimes fused together (combined quotations) on the basis of association of certain key words. Such modifications are numerous in Matthew and John, the authors in whom we find more numerous references to the Old Testament passages said to be fulfilled in the New Testament — the "formula quotations".[30]

There is nothing strange about all this. The New Testament authors were only following the hermeneutical patterns familiar in the Judaism of the time.[31] In fact, the Midrash and Pesher interpretations

29 Cfr A. T. HANSON, *The New Testament Interpretation of Scripture*, London 1980; ID., *The Living Utterances of God. The New Testament Exegesis of the Old*, Darton, Longman & Todd, London 1983; C. H. DODD, *According to the Scriptures*, London 1952; R. LONGENECKER, *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Grand Rapids 1975

30. For Matthew in particular, cfr K. STENDAHL, *The School of St Matthew and its Use of the Old Testament*, Uppsala 1954; G. M. SOARES-PRABHU, *The Formula Quotations in the Infancy Narrative of Matthew*, Biblical Institute, Rome 1976; as for Paul, cfr E. ELLIS, *Paul's Use of the Old Testament*, Oliver & Boyd, Edinburgh 1957

31. Cfr F. F. BRUCE, *Biblical Exegesis in the Qumran Texts*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids 1960; D. DAUBE, *The New Testament and Rabbinic Judaism*, London 1965; J. A. FITZMAYER, "4Q Testimonia and the New Testament", in *Theological Studies*, V (1961), pp. 297-333; ID., "The Use of Explicit Old Testament Quotations in Qumran

tended to explain the present experience as having taken place according to what the Scriptures had foretold. In this way they tried to make the Scriptures relevant to the present.[32] The framework of promise and fulfilment was very close to the general Jewish way of biblical interpretation. To this we should add, as far as the New Testament is concerned, the dominance of apologetic motifs.[33] The authors of the New Testament as well as early Christian writers like Justin and Barnabas made an apologetic use of the Old Testament, especially the prophets and the psalms, in their defence of Christianity against the Jews. There are such striking similarities among the early authors in the selection of the Old Testament texts and in the way of employing them, that the hypothesis has been advanced that there existed probably a common "book of testimonies" from which all of them drew.[34]

It is undeniable that there are certain aspects in the Bible about which we can and ought to speak in terms of promise and fulfilment. But this is one of the ways of interpreting the realities of the New Testament. If Jesus were to be interpreted no more than as the one in whom the prophecies of the Old Testament were fulfilled, then we could perhaps say, with D. Strauss, that "Christ was a historical person whose biography was written before his birth."[35] The person and message of Jesus spills over the fulfilment of the promises in the Jewish history.

We need to go beyond the salvation historical model which tries to pre-empt and appropriate the whole of the Bible through an approach of promise and fulfilment. The schema of promise and fulfilment does not do justice to the biblical message in its entirety. The New Testament references to the Old Testrament passages as being fulfilled (formula quotations) are relatively few and those too, as we pointed out, mainly to the prophets and the psalms. What about the rest of the Old Testament ? Much of the Old Testament materials seem to have no direct bearing on the realities of the New Testament and there

---

Literature and in the New Testament", in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 7 (1961), pp. 297-33; C. F. D. MOULE, "Fulfilment-words in the New Testament: Use and Abuse", in *New Testament Studies*, Vol. 14 (1968), pp. 293-320

32. This is specially the case with Midrash interpretation. Cfr R. BLOCH, art. "Midrash" in *Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplement*, Vol. V, Paris 1957, cols 1263-1281; cfr also A. G. WRIGHT, "The Literary Genre Midrash", in *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 28 (1966), pp. 105-138, 417-457.

33. B. LINDARS, *New Testament Apologetic. The Doctrinal Significance of the Old Testament Quotations*, SCM Press, London 1973[3].

34. J. R. HARRIS, *Testimonies*, Vols I & II, Cambridge 1916-1920; B. LINDARS, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-31.

35. Quoted in L. GOPPELT, *Typos. The Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament*, *op. cit.* (note 22) p. 14.

seems to be no trace of promise in them. This is true even of such an important text as Deut 26:5 ff. The text which begins with the words "A wandering Aramean was my father..." has often been called the "little historical creed" of the Israelites. But, interestingly, this text which has served as an show-piece for the advocates of the school of salvation history, holds out no promise nor does it refer to any future fulfilment.[36]

What the Old Testament and the New Testament are concerned about is basically the relationship of God and humanity in all its vicissitudes. The narrations, institutions, persons and witnesses are examples and illustrations of this relationship in a wide variety of forms and different situations. This general framework is very important today for the biblical interpretation. In this framework, the whole Old Testament does not become a mere fulfilment-oriented provisional reality, but rather promise and fulfilment form part of the inter-relationship of man to God and God to the whole of humanity. Precisely because the whole Bible is God-centered and man-oriented, the Old Testament does not cease to play its role after the coming of Jesus. Even today every person can find embodied in the persons and institutions of the Old Testament his or her own God-experience and his or her own human situation. Similarly the God-experience and the condition of human beings and their world found in the Scriptures of other religions can provide a lot of insights to interpret the biblical message of God's relationship to individuals and to humanity

By this I do not mean that the Scriptures of other religions and the religious history reflected in them, can play a role similar to the role of the Old Testament vis-à-vis the New. Such a position, I am afraid, may not do justice either to the Christian experience or to that of other religions. What I am trying to say is that the understanding of the person, the life and the message of Jesus cannot simply be exhausted by a model like salvation history, i.e. by finding in him the fulfilment of Jewish expectations and prophetic promises. This needs to be complemented in a real way by the experiences of other peoples — experiences which are related ultimately to the basic biblical concern of the relationship of man and God, God and humanity.

Having been exposed to other religious experiences and traditions, Christianity is today in a totally new and unprecedented situation. This is certainly not a small factor in its history and development but

36. Cfr N. Lohfink, *Great Themes from the Old Testament*, T. T. Clark, Edinburgh 1982, pp. 77-93. (With reference to the text of Deut 26: 5-10, the author says, "It does indeed lack all concept of evolution, ascent and progress. A greater future never comes into view" (p. 92).

one of epochal significance. In our situation of religious pluralism and in the face of contemporary socio-political experiences, we stand in need of re-interpreting the significance of the person of Jesus and his message of the Kingdom of God. This task cannot be accomplished by merely extending to new religions and cultural and geographic areas the New Testament interpretation.

It is evident that the New Testament authors did not possess any appreciable knowledge of the religious traditions of humanity. What they knew was limited to the immediate surroundings of their life and mission. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John or Paul did not think about Hinduism and Buddhism. The key for interpreting the person and message of Jesus was derived from their immediate history and tradition and the Jewish expectations. The Old Testament and especially those passages alluded to by the early Church, do not and cannot be considered as limiting the meaning of the person of Jesus and his message of the Kingdom of God. In fact, even within the N.T. we note a difference between the books directed to Jews and those directed to non-Jews.[37] Those addressed to non-Jews contain very seldom references to the O.T. This is an indication that the meaning of the Christ-event could not be brought home to non-Jews through the Old Testament alone.

New avenues for the understanding of the person and message of Jesus can be opened up in our situation of religious pluralism. But we must be attentive not to consider the new dimensions and new interpretations as substituting the Old Testament. For the O.T. has its own indispensable historical role to play. However, if Jesus is to be understood and interpreted in this new phase of Christianity, one of encounter with the traditions of the world religions, then the interpretative key from other religious experiences becomes not only desirable but even indispensable. Such interpretations will focus the attention not only on the mere fact of Christ-event, but equally on the eternal mystery — the Logos, the Wisdom of which Jesus is the historical enfleshment.

History as Event and History as Commitment

Salvation history in effect is the narration of the events of the Israelite and the New Testament history, and the interpretation of the same through faith. In this aspect salvation history is not very different from positive sciences which describe the external phenomena and explain their causes and interconnections. A positively oriented theolo-

37. R. LONGENECKER, *op. cit.* (note 29), p. 211.

gical model like salvation history therefore can only remain at the threshold of the life-reality of the people, without entering right into the centre and heart of their experiences — their hunger, destitution and suffering. No wonder then that the salvation history appears to speak of a salvation far removed from the present situation and experiences. The past biblical events, no matter how closely they are scrutinized through critical studies and exegesis, do not become yet a present experience of salvation.

By confining itself merely to the past events of salvation and its narration, the salvation history model does not do justice even to the Bible. It blunts the edge of the message of the prophets and arrests the force of the message of Jesus about the Kingdom of God which has a direct bearing on the realities of the life of the people and their oppression. In this sense the salvation history model is one more version of the traditional theology which is preoccupied with elucidating the meaning, sense, the noetic content of faith — a tendency which reached its radical expression when questions were raised about the very meaningfulness of any talk of God in the theology of the death of God.

Influenced by the developments in the Western theology, Vatican II itself was very much absorbed in the question of the meaningfulness of faith. It is true that the Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World represents a step forward in that it took a distance from a theology concerned with "essences" and "formulas" and tried to speak a dynamic language. However, the basic preoccupation seems to have been the place of the Church and the meaningfulness of Christian faith in the changed conditions of today and in a world that has estranged itself from the Christendom, as proved by the growing number of non-believers.[38] It is understandable that Vatican II would not go further than this. For the concerns and problems, and the experiences of history and of human and social realities of the theologians and the prelates who shaped the Council were conditioned by the post-war situation of Europe. In a world that was growing secular and more and more getting in control of the stream of history, the need of the hour was to emphasize the historic dimension of revelation and faith and to insist on the nature of the Church as situated in history The theological model of salvation history responded well to these objectives.

---

38. Cfr B. Lambert, "La problématique generale de la Constitution Pastorale", in *L'Eglise dans le Monde de ce Temps*, ed by Y. Congar-M. Peuchmaurd, Les Editions du Cerf, Paris 1967, pp. 131-170.

What is important for us is to note how, in all this, history has remained yet another issue for intellectual elaboration and study, as when the existentialists spoke of the historicity of man conditioned by time and space. The real question for us in India is not the theological clarification of the historicity of man and his faith, but one of *living* the Christian faith in the context of a history marked by dehumanizing oppressions, blatant contradictions in every sector of life, and gross violation of justice, human dignity and rights. The question is not how best we can make the faith meaningful to the poor, or how effectively the events of salvation can be communicated to them. The issue is not of meaning and communication. The real question is. through what transformations of reality will salvation break into the concrete historic experience of the poor, and how can their situation in history be changed ? How can salvation be experienced by the poor and the oppressed as something happening in their daily existence ?

The salvation historical orientation was adopted in the post-Conciliar period precisely with a view to regaining the sense of history lost sight of in a dogmatic and doctrinaire theology originating from the Enlightenment period. It became common place to contrast the post-Conciliar theology which underlined history with the ontological and substantialistic theologies of earlier times.

But there can be a theology which underlies the dimension of history and yet does not relate itself to the real situation of the people, to their *concrete* historical realities, and this seems to be the case with the model of salvation history. History is not merely the factuality of events, nor is it their narration, but is the area of human freedom in which people are involved to transform themselves through their involvement. This is not taken into account in a theology oriented along the lines of "*salvation* history." Salvation has not been effectively related to the cries and groanings of the people, to the situation of oppression to which they are subjected. It still continues to be a river flowing in a remote Garden of Eden, incapable of watering the parched desert of people's everyday realities and make it blossom.

Further, the perspective of salvation history seems to leave out of consideration the history of peoples and their traditions. It expects the people to be rootless so that they can be easily swept away and brought within the fold of the history of salvation. And yet, we know how important it is for a people to be rooted in tradition, if they are to live, flourish and blossom. It is through the heritage of tradition that the mind of a people, their approach to problems of life are shaped. In the life of a people as much as in the life of an individual there is al-

ways a struggle between the past inheritance and the new demands and challenges. Any response to the new which is not drawn from this root is bound to create a situation of alienation and cause a serious identity-crisis.

I believe that many of the problems which we face in the Church in India today ultimately stem from the fact that the encounter of the people of this country with Christianity took place without reference to their past history and tradition religious, social, cultural and political. This was possible because the theology of those times and the Christian living itself did not require feeding from the roots of the people. On the contrary, converts were required to cut themselves off their roots, and they were considered to become more Christian according to the greater degree of their renouncement.

Today, the Christians in this country are seriously handicapped After centuries of alienation, it has become extremely difficult for the Christian community to relate itself significantly to the history of the nation which has followed its own course. There is a certain diffidence among Christians about their own ability to do this task and a feeling of suspicion on the part of non-Christians as to the genuineness of the interest of the Christian community in the Indian heritage, and of its involvement in the struggle of the people of this country. The Christians in India need to regain and reaffirm today their roots as a people belonging to this country. In this attempt they need to be supported by a theology that is open, universalistic and above all sensitive to the concrete realities of history The model of salvation-history may not be adequate to fulfill this task.

Concluding Reflections

There are, evidently, certain aspects in the Bible which are salvation historical But it is undeniable that the dominance in recent decades of salvation history as theological model and as a hermeneutical method has created in our theological centres an attitude of Christian self-complacency. By its inner logic, presuppositions and approach. it has rendered us incapable of integrating in a holistic vision the religious experiences of humanity and of reaching out to the concrete history and struggles of the people. No wonder then that our theological education does not come to grips with the Indian situation.

The theological model of salvation history has created a chasm between the history of Israel and the histories of the rest of humanity on the assumption that the operations of God are confined within the parameters of a particular history. The salvation history has created

the impression that the histories of the peoples in the biblical times were merely a stage for the enacting of particular events of salvation, and the present histories of peoples with their cultures and religions, experiences of injustice and oppression, a new stage for the recital of the same events. One tends to forget that this view is partial and that the Bible itself speaks of God's concern for all the peoples: "Are you not like the Ethiopians to me, O people of Israel, says the Lord. Did I not bring up Israel from the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor and the Syrians from Kir ?" (Amos 9:7). Israel's role is to serve all peoples who are on God's horizon.

The overstressing of the concept of salvation history and the concept of election undergirding it can, perhaps, be traced back to the rise of modern nationalism in Europe. Studies in the field of hermeneutics today have made it clear that a neutral exegesis is not possible, and that every interpretation is conditioned by the world of the interpreter. The political expansion of England from the sixteenth century brought a heightened national consciousness. One spoke of the choice or election of the English nation to accomplish a divinely ordained "civilizing mission" towards the "primitive" peoples of the earth. The history of England was *the* history of the world. The French nation felt itself at the time of the French Revolution as the chosen people to inaugurate a new era in the world. Our own century has witnessed the irruption of German nationalism and the affirmation of the superiority of a race destined to conquer and rule the rest of the world. We have experienced the sad consequences of such nationalism.

One may have to study to what extent political and national experiences of this kind have conditioned the interpretation of the biblical message and led to the overstressing of the concepts of salvation history and election with the result that the openness of the Bible to other peoples and its universalistic perspectives concerning man, his life and his destiny, have been marginalized.

In fact, within the Bible itself we find a strong current of Wisdom thought which reaches out to what is universal. This is a more mature stage of development in Israel's religion, compared to the period that was characterized by an exaggerated attention to its own experiences and history. The secularization brought about by the Wisdom movement was a stage of growth in the Old Testament religious thinking. Similarly, the creation theology arose in Israel during the exile period, namely when they lived dispersed among and subject to foreign nations. Contact with other nations and religions

helped the Israelite religion out of its narrow-minded and particularistic mode of thinking, and to concern itself with what was supra-national and universal.

Wisdom is not something merely humanistic. It has got its roots in life itself and its experiences, and in as much as the life of man is the gift of God, Wisdom is not of man but of God.

The context of religious pluralism calls for a theology and theological education in India which would begin from more universalistic concerns, and in this effort the developed stage of the Israelite religion -- Wisdom - and the Indian religious tradition can meet to enlighten human life, the world, our relationship to God, and interpret and transform our present history.

Jesus himself has given us concrete indications as to where our theological education should begin and where it should tend to. The message of the Kingdom of God, the central concern of Jesus, was about man's life and problems, his struggles and groanings, hopes and expectations in his everyday existence under the rule of God. Precisely because it concerns humanity and its problems, the message of the Kingdom, like Wisdom, has no barriers. Its range is as wide as reality. The Kingdom of God cannot be the possession of any one people, just as life and God are not the possession of one people.

Theological education for us in India should become more and more an education to reality. The only sure method is to learn constantly from the school of Jesus how to see this reality with a sensitive heart and respond with a vibrant spirit to God's call today, by involving ourselves responsibly in transforming the world around us so that there may be abundance of life in justice, love and fellowship.

Man-Nature-Spirit: A Holistic Approach[1]

A. VAN EXEM, S J.

THE English language takes it easy. To express a scientific concept it borrows a common word from a dead language and loads it with the content it chooses. 'Hermeneutics' is such a term. *Hermēneuein* means 'to explain, interpret or translate', but 'hermeneutics' has no equivalent in real English. It is not surprising that it has none in any of our tribal languages.

Tribal villagers[2] do not study hermeneutics but apply it daily. Listening to a myth the Tribal refrains from defining or even consciously seeking its deeper meaning. He rather lets his mind move along with the details of the narrative to undergo its impact; then, with a mind so moulded, he proceeds to form a world-view, to enact rituals, to tackle his daily problems of life. Asked why he acts in this or that way, he appeals not to the myth but to tradition. Yet the action he takes is the only existing authentic and authoritative interpretation of his myth.

The hermeneutic approach of the Tribal and the understanding of this approach by the scientist tend to clash. The interpreter ought to learn from the villagers, rather than they from his discipline. This is not easy. The interpreter seeks results. He ought to follow the movement of the narrator's mind, but his desire to analyse the narration point by point for immediate purport distracts him at every step. He runs the danger of not seeing the wood for the trees, or, more technically, of overlooking the holistic approach of the Tribal.

'Holism' is as Greek a word as 'hermeneutic'. Though the English 'whole' is likely derived from the same root and means the same as *holos*, scientists were not confident that it covered their concept of holism. The many components of a culture are interlinked and organically integrated into a body, so that they all function together

1. This paper was read at "A Hermeneutics Consultation in the Tribal Central Belt of India", at the Gossner Theological College, Ranchi, 1st of March, 1984.
2. This article regards specifically the Tribals of Chotanagpur.

and contribute to the smooth and harmonious running of society. A holistic understanding credits this body with a soul. The identity of a culture exceeds the sum total of its components. It has a world-view to comprehend all being, an ethos to value all action, a goal to guide all effort. These views, values and aims exceed what can be actually and concretely apprehended, judged and desired.

The holist is right. The tribal culture at its deeper level of identity reduces its complex traits to ever greater simplicity, at the same time opening up ever larger perspectives. In spite of this it has been said that "holists are people who don't care to see the trees apart from the forest."[3] A culture is never fully balanced. New knowledge is not always assimilated or even accepted, new needs may create values which do not square with the old, earlier goals may prove unattainable, or no longer answer fresh aspirations A culture evolves; it remains ever in search of new identity. Further, since it is historically and environmentally determined, it has only a limited capacity to direct itself Most of the time it rather adapts to a changing environment or awaits fresh inspiration from contacts with the outside world.

The Tribal does not reason out a theory of holism but tries to follow it in his approach to life He is down-to-earth. However much he tries to cope with his environment, he is just now not quite satisfied that he is doing well He feels a more or less conscious urge to broaden his world-view, to develop his ethos and to adjust his goal. The holistic approach of the Tribal includes an attempt to reach beyond his present self.

We shall trace the Sarna[4] configuration man-nature-spirit in the economic, the social and the religious spheres. In each of these fields the configuration is expressed differently, yet these expressions proceed very much from the same mental attitude; they clarify each other, they are hermeneutics in action. In each of these fields there is a remarkable wholeness and harmony of perception, evaluation and goal-setting. As we proceed from one field to another, this wholeness integrates an ever greater complex of aspects, yet becomes ever more simple. In spite of this, there appear disturbing elements. Do they form part of tribal identity ? And if they do not, can they ever be overcome at the surface of social and economic expression ? Does not the very soul of tribal culture call for assistance in its evolution ?

---

3. John J. Honigmann, *Understanding Culture*, Oxford and IBH Publishing Co., Calcutta, Indian edition 1967, p. 314.
4. Sarna is a common name for different tribal religions of the Central Belt of India.

The Economic Sphere

The Sarna villager, as we said, is down-to-earth At the economic level he is interested in and motivated by the welfare of his children, his cattle and his crops. This seems to be the only world he is concerned with. He does not want to be rich, but only to have enough.

Man and nature form an interdependent whole. Man cannot live without nature, and nature cannot produce his sustenance without his help. He moves along with the seasons to prepare his land, to sow and to reap, to hunt and to raise his cattle He himself partakes in nature's cycle of birth, marriage and death. He lives close to nature and blends with it.

The tribal villager is an inveterate optimist, always hoping for the best. He is not used to putting by for the future he counts on nature to provide a better crop. He does not seek leadership or initiative· he lets nature be the guide. He does not burn with ambition he is content to be a part of the whole. He is a man with simple needs and simple aspirations, like the birds of the sky

There is good luck and bad luck. Here the spirit world enters into the configuration. The guardian spirits[5] blend with both nature and man. Spread out over the countryside they form part of nature Their duty is to care for plants and animals and to protect them from harm. Yet, to obtain their rightful share of nature's produce they are dependent on man. Therefore the major farming operations are introduced with seasonal sacrifices to 'feed' the spirits. And since they form part of nature, one must trust them to play their beneficent role: in the oncoming season after the festival, song and dance must express joy at the benefits which their goodwill is bound to bring about

At the same time, the spirits share also in the greed and meanness of man. They misuse their guardianship to cause illness and misfortune. Man, then, offers sacrifice to obtain their goodwill and to restore the *ideal harmony of man-nature-spirit*.

This ideal of a happy existence in the present world is projected in afterlife. The deceased live on in the world of the spirits as ever benevolent ancestors. Whether they reside in the store-room (the *ading* of the Mundas) or in substantial underground houses with bountiful fields (the *merxa* of the Oraons), they share in the fortune of their living family and try to keep it in harmony with nature as well as with the spirit world.

---

5. Guardian spirits: tutelary spirits of the village territory, different from ancestor spirits.

This world of man-nature-spirit in which the family functions as the smallest economic unit forms so complete a whole, and the Tribals are so single-minded in their approach, that many observers — friends of the Tribals — have thought that the tribal value system had no goal beyond a happy-go-lucky existence in which their basic material needs would be fulfilled. They had not seen how the same tribal mind and its holistic approach function at different levels. We might say that the hermeneutical approach of the Tribals had eluded them.

The Social

The sketch we have drawn, however true to life, is clearly not to be taken for a picture of tribal life. The Tribal feels social. The pattern of thought which functions at the economic level is also at work to comprehend and unify the approach to the social.

The family finds its social identity first of all in the village. The village is actually an extended family. Life is not spent indoors but in the courtyard, in the village. Work is performed and recreation is sought according to age and sex groups. The village provides security no orphan or widow is left abandoned. It exacts loyalty: there is no life outside its community. The village celebrates man's participation in nature: it rejoices in its births and mourns its dead; not two individuals, not even merely two families, contract a marriage, but two villages --ask a group of villagers on their way to a marriage where they are going to, and they answer, "We are going to marry". The village is identified with its people, and people are identified by their village.

A village is not a conglomeration of houses. Besides being a community of people, it is also a territory with well defined boundaries, including arable land and forest: it is a particular section of nature. Both people and nature identify in a village.

The guardian spirits operate within the same territory and respect its boundaries. They must know "their" peopole: there is a sacrifice to introduce the groom to the spirits of his bride's village where he will be a frequent visitor. Particular marriage omens — nature's way of telling man's destiny — are sought within the boundaries of the villages of the groom and of the bride, and not in between the two boundaries. In the veneration of spirits all the people of the village are represented by its *pahan*, the village sacrificer, and at the level of the tribe no one is above him: as a religious unit the village is autonomous. The village is a complex of man-nature-spirit which has a definite identity.

On the face of it the village contains also an element of divisiveness which might be thought to detract from the holistic approach. Residence is virilocal and inheritance patrilineal. One might therefore imagine that the different villages would drift further and further apart. But this is not so. The tribe is strictly clan-exogamous, and inter-clan marriages within the village are frowned upon. Brides of other clans are therefore inducted from many other villages. This is never allowed to be forgotten· married women are customarily called by the name of their native village. It is precisely by marriage, the process of life by which man shares most closely in the life of nature, that the village unites in itself the tribe as a whole.

The tribe is the real owner of the land: "Adivasi land" is a very pertinent term. The ancestors had not merely "snatched the land out of the claws of the tigers and the fangs of the snakes", they had also, "cutting the trees and digging out the stumps", cóme across the nature spirits who were deemed to be the real first owners They had entered into a contract with them. They had left a plot of *sal* trees untouched and reserved for the spirits, and periodically offered them sacrifices; the spirits would in return continue to care for nature and extend their protection to its inhabitants. Thus the unity man-nature-spirit, sanctified by history, acquires a new wholeness.

Life in the tribe is ideally seen as complete, sufficient to cover all aspects The tribe and its tradition is the ultimate judge of all human behaviour and the loyalty it exacts is total The individual can be satisfied with scant material possessions precisely because he has his personal destiny as a link in the chain of the tribe which is supreme. The holistic approach of the individual is thus broadened to include the whole tribe with its past, its present and its future.

The Religious

It is, however, in its religion that a people unifies its most fundamental attitudes to life and ultimately justifies its day-to-day reactions to varying situations. We find in the Sarna religion the configuration man-nature-spirit reduced to its utmost simplicity.

Regarding the unity of man and nature, the Sarna runs parallel to the Genesis. Creation is first shown as having two aspects: the shaping of order and the gift of life. These two aspects are combined into a continuous process in the creation of man: God first shapes a body out of clay, and then infuses it with a vital principle. The whole cosmos and all created life came into existence in function of man; they would

have no meaning but for him. The essential unity of man and nature could not be affirmed more forcefully.

Man's relationship with nature involves a responsibility on his part. God gives him a plough (Munda) or the first seeds (Oraon), and thereby implies that he must care for the land and till it so that it may produce his food. Thus the ownership of the land by the tribe and the care for it by each family are given a cosmic dimension.

It is in the context of this fundamental man-nature relationship that the spirits have their origin. According to the Asur legend (Munda and Oraon) the iron smelters were greedy and proud. Rather than tilling the land they smelted iron and upset the ecology with the heat of their fires. After the menfolk in search of gold had stepped into their own kiln and got burnt to nothingness, their wives were at a loss to secure their livelihood. They therefore promised obedience, implying that they would now fulfil their duty of caring for nature. They were therefore appropriately appointed as its guardians. Thus the origin of the spirits, their status as nature guardians, their benevolence and greed, all are explained by the necessity of an interdependence between created man and nature.

The same story accounts for the origin of the tribe. When as an outcome of the sin of mankind God withdrew his visibility from the world and the Asur women were turned into spirits, God ordained that the good people, who according to the legend had trusted nature, would henceforward be venerated by the tribe. They are its first parents. Through them mortal man is linked with the cosmic events of the beginning. Through them the ideal interdependence of man and nature has been preserved in the tribe. This same relationship is kept in afterlife. While man's body returns to the earth, man himself lives on and blends with nature as an ancestor spirit.

The Tribal could rest content to be a part of nature because it was in him that nature culminated. Both man and nature are designed by an all-good Creator: they are essentially good. If there is evil, it comes from man not following the design. If there is punishment, it is because the wholeness of creation avenges its violation. If man's fortunes appear unpredictable and beyond control, it is because not only the good but also the negative tendencies and qualities of the people of earlier times have been perpetuated in the spirits. But even spirits can be controlled and placated. The Tribal is an optimist: he trusts the goodness of creation. It is this goodness which will continue to operate when man lives on as a spirit.

Ultimately, the configuration man-nature-spirit was satisfactory because it was designed by the One who made the universe for man. Since man is grounded in nature and gives it meaning, and since he will return to it as a spirit, the configuration man-nature-spirit may finally be put more concisely: man is a creature and will forever be. We thus obtain the greatest simplicity of an all-inclusive vision.

The Pattern Upset

This holistic understanding of the Tribals has stood the test of millennia. And yet it no longer covers present-day conditions The agrarian aggression of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries shattered the tribal economy. The sacredness of nature was violated. Land was looted and despoiled by intruders who did not care for it, in whom the tribal man-nature relationship did not appear. Human law upheld this lawlessness. The indignities which were heaped on the Tribals fell outside the categories of tribal thought. True to tradition they sought the cause of this human evil in the realm of spirits. Their own guardian spirits had not been equal to their task of defending the boundaries of their land. It seemed that the ancestors had vainly entered into a covenant with them. The spirits brought in by the intruders had proved to be superior. Thus a new set of spirits which were said not to be survivals of humans but of unknown origin had to be appeased. To cope with them, the traditional system of divination adopted alien ways and alien myths, and called on alien deities. A contradiction grew between the idealism of equality and the harsh reality of economic inequality, between the tribe and the individual, between the world-view and reality. To cope with it the system reacted negatively: jealousy, strife within the tribe, accusations of private spirit veneration and of witchcraft abounded. Thus the holistic approach of the Tribals suffered in the economic, social and religious fields, and in each of these fields each term of the configuration man-nature-spirit was affected.

However strongly the unjust structures of the previous two centuries must be censured, the time has come to be no longer blinded by them. Were they the basic cause of the present day sufferings, or were they not rather the catalyst which brought the internal contradictions to a head a century before the time ? Is it certain that conditions would be so much better if the *Khuntkatti*[6] system had been preserved wherever it existed ? Or if there had not been any zamindars ? Is it now so much better in the Kolhan where there were no zamindars ?

6. *Khuntkatti*: an ancient system of land tenure under which the land belongs to the original settlers of the village and is unalienable from their descendants.

No doubt, one may reply that new injustices replace former ones. Yet our description of the holistic approach of the Tribals seems to demand that we go deeper into the matter.

In earlier times the Tribals had preserved their identity and distinctiveness by keeping themselves segregated from other cultures. Contact with others has now become unavoidable, and, if the Tribals are to take their place in the modern world, indispensable. Their identity must be reequipped to cope with this new world. The holistic approach to remain holistic must cover new realities. This will not be achieved by merely removing injustices or by relying on the goodwill of others.

Though there may not be all the goodwill there ought to be, there is probably now as much of it as the Tribals can realistically hope for There are scholarships, there is job reservation, special legislation, etc. While each of these privileges must be preserved as a right, it is not by adding to their list that the Tribals will turn the corner. It might be more helpful to examine how they can ready themselves to make the most of whatever opportunity they get.

In Search of Renewal

Very few words would suffice to draw up a theoretical programme for Tribals to make economic progress. It would include education for all, use of fertilizers, insecticides and improved seeds on all fields, digging one well a year per hamlet, growing second crops, cash crops, putting up tribal shops, including repair shops, which all Tribals would patronize, etc. Contrary to what one often hears, capital outlay would pose no problem: start small and plough back the profits.

But this theoretical programme is sadly unrealistic the necessary infrastructure of social attitudes is lacking. There is a craving for immediate consumption, an undue reliance on nature to provide, a reluctance to give up antiquated methods, a downgrading of initiative, ambition and emulation, a social need of wasting time if not of spending money on drink, and a resistance against progressive leadership. Before the Tribals can move ahead wholeheartedly on the road to economic betterment, their holistic view of man and nature must evolve. 'Man' ought to encompass all powers of mind and heart, and all they can achieve. 'Nature' ought to include all realities of modern life. 'Man caring for nature' ought to be understood as something more than tilling the land and venerating the spirits. It ought to comprise the use of all available technology.

We seem to run into a basic problem: while economic improvement is felt to be necessary, the urgency of developing new socio-

economic attitudes is hardly appreciated at all. Indeed, the two first terms of the configuration man-nature-spirit cannot be easily updated, independently of the third. The economic and social dimensions of the world-view cannot be severed from the religious The circle will be broken only if the religious background of social and economic behaviour is suitably adapted.

It may now be thought that we have only compounded the difficulty. Does the remodelling of a world-view not become harder as we approach the area where it reaches its greatest simplicity ? To put it concretely. is it not as unrealistic to expect a Tribal to change his views about nature spirits as to hope that he will open a shop ?

It is at this stage that we must remember that all the components of a culture function together as an organic whole. An imbalance felt in the economic sphere is also reflected in the religious.

It has been remarked that not rarely villagers suffer more from unjust structures which are inherent in tribal society than from those which are imposed on them from the outside. Greed and jealousy may be common to all peoples, but they are particularly harmful in tribal society because jealousy has been as it were institutionalized: suspicion of private spirit veneration and of witchcraft always looms behind it. Tribals consistently denounce all greed and jealousy. not only the persons who are given to such private veneration are resented, but also the spirits whom they entice. People resent the (often alien) spirits all the more because of the expenses involved in their placation.

It has also been remarked that in many instances the Sarna youth, especially the youth that has some education, has become impatient of traditional religion. They notice how the modern world is bypassing the tribe. They generally still do fear spirits, but they come to regard regular spirit propitiation as backward, wasteful and of doubtful efficacy. This new frame of mind is not to be dismissed as the mere effect of a generation gap or of the first onset of sophistication. The youth instictively feels — though they may not be able to explicitate this conceptually — that spirit propitiation conditions those who practise it to placate an adverse situation rather than to face it with personal and constructive action. In the face of such developments it would seem that the Sarna people themselves call for a new interpretation of 'spirit'. Quite a few of them feel that they have been unfaithful to their ancestors by venerating all sorts of alien spirits. Change is desired.

Apart from the movement toward Christianity, a twofold process of change is actually manifesting itself. There is first a slow but unmistakably broadening drift toward syncretism. The splendour of non-tribal festivities attracts ever more participants. The divination system has by now been nearly fully hinduized. It looks as if the world-view, ethos and goal-setting of the common man were thereby little affected, yet there is a trend to upgrade the nature spirits to the status of minor deities. If this carries on unchecked, it will end in lowering the Creator to the status of a mere high god, the first of a pantheon. Now, in societies that turn polytheistic, man is no longer seen as the very purpose of nature's existence; he becomes an accidental object at the mercy of a cosmic struggle for power, and this struggle justifies and accentuates the inequalities found among men. In one region where Hinduism has penetrated even into the religious myths of origin, tribesmen are being called *Dhangars*, 'servants'. This is not what Tribals want.

Religious change is also being sought consciously and explicitly as a clear turn about, a leap into a new way of life. As contacts with outsiders had disrupted tribal economy and social life, and could not be handled in any other way, various messianic movements sprang up, and new ones keep emerging even today. They start invariably with a vigorous and uncompromising rejection of all nature spirits and seek a new relationship with the divine. Many of them are short-lived, but some of them survive. They had initially a very positive influence on the character of their adherents. Yet finally they get bogged down by separatism. They do not seem to deliver the goods, and many of the leaders become increasingly aware of it.

The failure of the messianic movements is not the fault of their repudiation of the nature spirits as agents of the divine, or of their appreciation of God's direct activity in human life. This remodelling of the tribal world-view remains valuable, and affects the behavioural patterns deeply. Unlike the drift toward polytheism, it is consonant with the fundamental conceptions of the ancient religion. It is a liberation from something that was resented. It is a development of something that was already there. It is not a loss but a gain.

The ancient world-view, we said, can be condensed to the conception that man is a creature. This must remain unaltered. The tribesman should still see himself as created by God to live forever, and nature as made for him. 'Man', however, must clearly include all human beings. Basically it is the concept of the Loving God that should be deepened out so that it may shed new light on that of 'creature',

'man' and 'spirit'. The spontaneous emergence of so many messianic movements and the zest with which Tribals have taken to a Christian way of life are indications that this is the way in which they want to recast their holistic approach to the configuration man-nature-spirit.

Conclusion

Today's missiology faces a dichotomy. Not rarely the struggle for justice on the one hand, and the specifically spiritual work on the other hand, are treated not as two complementary aspects of evangelization, but as unrelated if not opposed to each other. A clearer perception of the tribal holistic approach may help to overcome this dichotomy.

It shows that in tribal praxis the economic, the social and the religious form an integrated whole. Action at any of these levels will gain in effectiveness in the measure it extends to the other fields as well. Justice is not a commodity which can be granted to the Tribals by an outside agent. It is a growth which must be nurtured from within It demands all the power which a society can muster. It demands a faith to cope with reality. On the other hand, the spiritual is not something primarily conceptual, it is to be expressed in the concrete by responsible action in all spheres of life. Justice and faith go hand in hand.

The study of the holistic approach further shows that the different spheres of life are not juxtaposed, but rather superimposed on each other, and that it is at the level of the religious that the greatest unity of purpose is reached. The well-wisher, then, is not to select any particular level at which he hopes to make a significant but limited contribution. He must go to the Tribals with the fulness of his own motivation, hoping that they will share his faith to the full. The aim is to create a new humanity in Him who was sent to this earth

In view of the irreversible need of tribal contact with non-Tribals, an evolution of the tribal world-view seems to be the need of the hour. We may add a final consideration. The Tribals will fully come into their own and be fully integrated as equals into the mainstream of Indian society, not when others grant them equality, nor when they become indistinguishable from others, but rather when they themselves set out to share with others their own positive qualities and values. The desire to contribute to the enrichment of cultures other than their own, however, will not grow until their religion develops into an universal one, until their holistic understanding is adjusted to comprehend modern conditions. Our task is then to assist them in this, so that they may one day be aware that they are in many a way privileged above countless millions of Indians.

Document

The Attitude of the Church towards the Followers of Other Religions

The document of the Secretariat for Non-Christians, sharing its reflections and orientations on dialogue and mission, appeared on June 25th, 1984 in the English version of *L'Osservatore Romano*.[1] It commemorates 20 years of Pope Paul VI's *Ecclesiam Suam* and the establishment of the Secretariat for Non-Christians by the same Pope in 1964. The Secretariat evaluates the experiences of dialogue and the doctrinal and pastoral repercussions of dialogue on mission, taking the vision of the second Vatican Council and the subsequent magisterium statements as norm and point of departure. In this commentary, we draw attention to significant points that throw light on inter-religious dialogue and the mission of the Church in a religiously plural country like India.

In India those who are engaged in dialogue feel ill at ease with the term 'non-Christian' since it means looking at the world of religions exclusively from the point of view of Christians, something that is in bad taste in the context of dialogue. We notice with some satisfaction that in the document there is a move away from the use of expressions like 'non-Christian religions', or 'non-Christians', found in the Council documents and in *Ecclesiam Suam*, to such expressions as "the followers of other religions", as found in the very title of the document (1), "individuals and communities of other faiths" (2), "followers of other religious traditions of the world" and "believers of other faiths". Only rarely does the document use "non-Christians", apart from when it quotes texts of Vatican II and *Ecclesiam Suam*. The use of a new vocabulary is not just window-dressing. It points to new perceptions

The document has not adopted the expression "living faiths" as the World Council of Churches has done, though it refers to the WCC's commission for "Dialogue with People of Living Faiths and Ideologies" (8). It has not included dialogue with people of living

1. The document on "The Attitude of the Church towards Believers of Other Religions" was approved by the Pope on 10th June, 1984, and was printed in Italian in *L'Osservatore Romano* of 11-12 June 1984. It is the result of the working document that has gone through four successive drafts (March 1981, June 1981, February 1982, and February 1983) It is a response to the demand made by the members of the Secretariat for Non-Christians in its general assembly of 1979. Every draft was sent to the members and consultors of the Secretariat and to the different Roman dicasteries. In view of the general assembly of 1983, some bishops and theologians representing different cultural regions were consulted. They presented their observations and suggestions to the assembly. The present text has been studied, modified and approved in the general assembly held from 27th February to 3rd March, 1984 at Grottaferrata (cf. *Doc. Cath.*, 1880, 2nd Sept. 1984, p. 844). The bracketed numbers refer to the sections of the document. Underlinings in the texts cited are added.

ideologies in its reflection since there is a separeate Secretariat for Non-Believers. The document intends to help Christians to live out the directives of the Council in our relations to peoples of other religious traditions and to offer some reflections and orientations on dialogue and mission.

While explaining the mission of the Church, the document recalls the doctrine of the Council about the saving love of God revealed in Christ which is active in the world by means of the Spirit[2]. "The Church is to be the living sign of that love" (9), but in no. 11 the document says that the mission of the Church is also to work for the extention of the Kingdom and its values among all men and women (LG 5, 9, 35; GS 39, 43-45, 91, 92; UR 2; DH 14; AA 5).

The acts of the subsequent ecclesiastical teaching, such as those of the Synods of the Bishops on Justice in 1971, on Evangelisation in 1974, on Catechetics in 1977, and the statements of Paul VI, John Paul II, and of bishops conferences of Asia, Africa and Latin America, have taught "commitment to mankind, to social justice, to liberty, and the rights of man, and the reforms of unjust social structures" (12) to be "essential elements of the mission of the Church and indissolubably connected to it" (RH 15). This is stressed again in no. 13. The complex mission of the Church is expressed in different ways.

Indispensable values in dialogue and mission

In the mission of announcing Christ, the *promotion of and respect for the true freedom* of other persons and the search of truth in a manner proper to the dignity of the human person and his social nature, since "man is the first path the Church must traverse in carrying out its mission (19), have to be kept in mind and cherished. In its mission, the Church must respect and love all that is good in the culture and religious commitment of the followers of other religions, i.e. "respect for everything which is the Spirit . has produced in man" (RH 12, EN 79).

Foundation of Mission

Dialogue is intrincic to the mission It is not a strategy of opportunism (20). Fidelity to man who has the aspiration and the need to be considered a responsible subject is the door leading to dialogue. The experience in interpersonal dialogue leads one to discover that "one does not possess the truth in a perfect and total way" yet one "can walk together with others towards that goal" (21). These

2. It is surprising and thrilling to note that the text published in English by the *Secretariatus Pro Non-Christianis* speaks here of the Holy Spirit in feminine terms. It reads: "The Spirit both anticipates and accompanies the path of the church, which, nevertheless, feels itself impelled to discern the signs of Her presence, to follow Her wherever She leads to serve Her as a humble and discreet collaborator" (24). The English edition of *L'Osservatore Romano* changes the text into masculine, but lets one feminine pronoun slip: "The Spirit both anticipates and accompanies the path of the Church which nevertheless, feels impelled to discern the signs of his presence, to follow him wherever she leads and to serve him as a humble and discreet collaborator". The French version in *Doc. Cath*. uses the masculine. I have not seen the Italian or the Latin texts.

expressions, though generally stated, would apply to Christians no less than to people of other faiths, expressions not so common in the earlier Church documents. Neither were such expressions, common among those engaged in dialogue, as "*mutual* affirmation, *reciprocal* correction and fraternal *exchange*" that can "purify" and "enrich" the religious experiences and outlook of the *partners* in dialogue.

In the dynamics of the dialogical encounter, Christians "profit from the gifts which God bestows so generously" to other believers (21). The growing socio-cultural interdependence, the task of human promotion and the pursuit of peace makes the dialogical way of human relationships more urgent (21).

The Church understands her call to dialogue from her faith in the Trinitarian mystery, God's life of communion and interchange, where we contemplate the universe and history filled by the gifts of the Father's pervasive love. Despite some violent manifestations of evil, in the ups and downs of *every people* "there is present the power of grace which elevates and redeems" (22). The Church has the duty to celebrate and promote "among all mankind the movement of the gifts of the Father" (22). The Word and the Wisdom, that is Christ, enlightens every person since "in Him is manifested the mystery of God and mankind" (23, RH 8, 10, 11, 13), and He is the redeemer present in every human encounter to liberate us from selfishness and enable us to love one another (23).

The Spirit, operative in the depth of people's hearts and moving them towards truth, works "outside the visible confines of the Mystical Body" (RH 16; GS 22; AG 15). The Church has the task to *discern* the Spirit's work, accompany it and serve as a humble collaborator of the Spirit (24).

The document's new stress on the *kingdom* theology is clear when it says: "The reign of God is the final end of all persons". The Church which is to be "its seed and beginning" (LG 5, 9) "is called from the first to start out on this path towards the kingdom, and *with the rest of humanity* to advance towards that goal" (25). In this passage a common pilgrimage of all peoples towards the goal is stressed. It implicitly acknowledges the plural ways of different religions towards the goal of the kingdom. This common march towards the goal includes the struggle and victory over evil. The Church sees the fulfilment of this march "in the perfect communion of all mankind as brothers in God" (25). In a kingdom theology that supports dialogue, theocentrism is stressed, while the specific and unique role of Christ is not weakened.

The spiritual patrimony of other religions expressed in the Council as "elements that are true and good" (OT 16), "precious things both religious and human" (GS 92), "seeds of contemplation" (AG 18), "elements of truth and grace" (AG 9), "seeds of the Word" (AG 14, 15) and "rays of the truth which illuminates all mankind" (NA 2), becomes a genuine invitation to dialogue (NA 2, 3, AG 11) both in matters that unite us and in our differences (26). This dialogue "will help to learn what treasures a bountiful God has distributed among the nations of the

earth", as it was clearly stated by the Council (AG 11, AG 41, AA 14, 29).

Forms or Levels of Dialogue

The document lists various forms of dialogue gathered from the experience of recent years:

a) The dialogue of life is a "manner of acting, an attitude and a spirit" that guides one's conduct. It includes "concern, respect and hospitality .. and leaves room for the other person's identity, modes of expression and values". This is respecting and accepting the other in his otherness. Dialogue thus understood becomes a constituent dimension of everything a Christian does, be it simple presence and witness, service or direct proclamation. There cannot be a non-dialogical proclamation (CJC 787.1), for any mission not penetrated by the spirit of dialogue would contradict the demands of true humanity and of the Gospel (29). All Christians are invited to live this out in the daily lives (30).

b) Another level of dialogue is that which takes place in "deeds and collaboration with others for goals of humanitarian, social, economic, or political nature", oriented towards the progress of humanity. Christians and peoples of other religions confront the problems of the world together (31). The collaboration of Christians with followers of other religions for the promotion of social justice, moral values, peace and liberty is demanded "by the virtue of their own faiths" (32).

c) The dialogue of specialists concerns itself either with religious heritage of different religions in order to deepen and enrich them, or the application of the shared expertise to the problems of humanity. Such a dialoge of specialists takes place "in pluralistic societies where diverse traditions and ideologies co-exist and sometimes come in contact" (33). An allusion to dialogue with ideologies occurs only here. Such a dialogue besides facilitating understanding and appreciation of each other's values promotes communion and fellowship (NA 1). This would work, for the Christian, towards an evangelical transformation of culture (EN 18-20) (63). The document thus affirms the value of dialogue in itself, apart from direct proclamation (34).

d) The dialogue of religious experience occurs when people rooted deeply in their own religious traditions share experiences of faith, prayer, etc., as their way of searching the Absolute. Each partner of dialogue may communicate the reasons of his or her own faith. Even if there are some deep differences between faiths, they do not prevent such a dialogue. Each believer must learn humbly to refer the differences to God who is "greater than our hearts" (1 John 3:20). "The Christian has the opportunity of offering to the other the possibility of experimenting in an existential way with values of the Gospel" (35).

Dialogue and Mission

The document then deals with some aspects of the multiple relationship between dialogue and mission. First it deals with mission and conversion. Missionary proclamation which has conversion as its goal (AG 13, CJC 787.2) must be understood in the context of dialogue. Dialogue helps us reflect on the spiritual process of conversion. The theology of conversion understood biblically is not primarily membership conversion, but a "humble and penitent return of the heart to God" and a submission of one's life to him. All human beings are called to this conversion. Then the document says something significant. In such a spiritual process, one may be called "to leave one's previous spiritual or religious situation in order to direct onéself towards another" (37). The call to conversion includes an overcoming of oneself. Every conversion thus understood is a work of grace.

But in such a process of conversion, respect for the conscience is sovereign (38). This primacy of conscience is to be respected specially in religious matters (DH 3). The principal agent of conversion is the Holy Spirit. It is the Spirit that moves one to the act of faith in Jesus the Lord (39). In dialogue also, a Christian normally desires to share his experience of Christ with a brother of another religion, while similarly expecting the other believer to desire to share his own faith with the Christian (40).

The experience of dialogue makes us reflect on the meaning of conversion which according to the Council is the goal of missionary proclamation. The context of dialogue gives a new focus, precision and spiritual depth to the understanding of conversion. It is a challenge presented to *all* believers. There is no expression of superiority or any "fulness-of-truth" approach on the part of the Church in this document. In the very desire of communicating that which is specific to our faith, we must respect the natural desire of another believer to share his faith (40).

Dialogue for the building of God's reign

God continues his reconciling work. With faith in the Spirit promised to her the Church marches towards the fulness of truth. In her opennes to all individuals, peoples, and cultures, she looks for the seeds of goodness and truth and knows that "God has a loving plan for every nation" (Acts 17: 26-27). In this knowledge the Church wants to work together with all peoples in order to fulfil this plan, in the recognition of God's infinite and varied Wisdom, and thus contribute to the evangelisation of cultures (EN 18-20).

The document makes its own the words of Pope Paul VI and John Paul II for the World Day of Peace (42). The dialogue with peoples of different traditions having their own precious elements of religion and humanity can help all "to build up the world in genuine peace", and this we are called to do as brothers and sisters, children of the one Father (42). Dialogue thus understood becomes a source of hope and works unto "communion in mutual transformation" (43).

God works out his design in his own way. The Spirit of God opens the path of dialogue to individuals and peoples in order to overcome racial, social and religious differences and to bring about mutual enrichment" (44). The Church is called to recognise and to live in the patience of God, without compulsive forms of behaviour.

In the document's view there is no proclamation without dialogue and no dialogue without proclamation. Yet one is not a means to the other (cf. no. 20). Proclamation discovers its true mode of communication compatible with the Gospel morality in the imperative of the dialogical attitude towards the humanity and towards the religious faith of the followers of the world religions. Dialogue also brings a newer understanding of proclamation. The theology of proclamation can no more be the same after the authentic recognition of the value and imperative of dialogue. Dialogue opens broader frontiers for the mission of the Church in her commitment to the service of the kingdom.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Woman in the Bible. By Mary EVANS *Exeter, The Pater Noster Press*, 1983 Pp. 160. £ 4.95.

This is a succinct overview of the Biblical presentation of the woman and an attempt to refocus the markedly patriarchal view of Christian tradition. While Christian scholarship has been used to present both the dominant tradition and its critique, the book does not become too erudite for the non-scholar. Due to its subject it also escapes becoming abstract. The author's point of view is generally commonsensical For instance, the traditional reader takes Genesis 2 to mean that woman is secondary to man because she was created after him; Mary Evan's pert reply: "In Genesis to assume that being created first implies superiority in any sense must mean that chapter 1 implies that the animals are superior to man, and chapter 2 that they are superior to woman" (p 14) Having pointed out woman's inferior role in contemporary cultures like the Graeco-Roman and the Jewish, she is able to effectively demonstrate how revolutionary Christ was in treating women as subjects and not objects.

In defending St Paul's apparently indefinsible position on women she points out that the Christian concept of leadership as service and Paul's hierarchical structure with the man/husband at the apex does not necessarily imply authority over the woman/wife. However in her attempt to view St Paul's opinions in a light favourable to women, the author's argument tends at times to become a little specious. Of I Timothy 2. 12 ("I permit no woman to teach or have authority over man") she states: "The 'authority' refers to a particular kind of dominating authority" (p. 109) Does it not follow that "this particular kind of dominating authority" is being categorically denied to the woman, because it is reserved for the man ?

Evan's thesis is that in the New Testament the relation between man and woman is a complementary one and there is a need for a re-examination of the attitude of the Church today. Couched in liberal-humanist rather than radical terms, the book is not likely to meet with a hard core conservative reaction. Equally the feminist who has hitherto had scant respect for St Paul, might, if not reconsider, at least re-read him !

Angela KORETH

Book Reviews

Spirituality

A God Who Speaks. By Jacques GUILLET. Transl. by Edmond Bonin. New York, *Paulist Press*, 1979. Pp. vi-101. $ 4.95.

Jacques Guillet is a scripture scholar who is a contemplative. The book before us is another fruit of his contemplation on the God who speaks I think it is important to underline the fact that Guillet's book leads one to feel God as a person with whom we are related: not all "spiritual" writing does that *A God Who Speaks* deals with the word (and words) God has spoken: to Abraham, to Moses, to the Prophets, in the Psalms, in Jesus, in the Church, in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, also outside the scriptures. An appendix gives practical ways that can help the reader to "get the most out of this book". Further readings are suggested, guidelines for study are given, and the final word is on how all this changes our life today. The book is very suited for prayerful reading. I recommend it wholeheartedly

Roman LEWICKI, S J.

Wellsprings. A Book of Spiritual Exercises. By Anthony DE MELLO, S J. *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1984. Pp. xvi-323 Paperback. Rs 40, $9, cloth: Rs 45, $ 13.

Anthony de Mello, already renowned among readers in India and abraod for his two bestsellers, *Sadhana, A Way to God* (cf VIDYAJYOTI, 1978, p. 479) and *The Song of the Bird* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI 1983, pp. 90-7, 350-2), has added another inspiring book to his list. *Wellsprings* is meant for people of all spiritual affiliations. In the author's own words, "This book is meant to lead from ... feeling, fantasy and sense to silence". (p. xv). The book contains six major themes: Reality, Restoration, Christ, Life, Love, and Silence, and each of these themes is subdivided into a series of topics. The topics are meant to help the person making the "spiritual exercises" to get in touch with himself or herself, the community of people, the world around and finally with the Supreme Being. The book offers a lot of food for the senses, imagination, feelings and fantasies, finally leading to an interior silence.

Although the book is not to be confused with the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius, yet it follows and stresses one of the classical Ignatian principles highly recommended for the retreatant, namely "stop where your heart finds devotion" (Annotation no 2 of the *Spiritual Exercises*) In the last section of the book the reader will find "Seedlings", a collection of inspiring statements culled from the various parts of the book A word of special appreciation for printers and publishers, who have done a marvellous job with a nice get-up from cover to cover, and an attractive printing style all through the book.

Joe MATHIAS, S J

The Path of Interior Knowledge. By Parmananda R DIVARKAR, S J *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1983. Pp xi-156 Rs. 22, $ 6.

The Path of Interior Knowledge re-echoes with greater clarity and comprehension the author's search into the spirituality of Ignatius of Loyola, beautifully summarised in his earlier book entitled *Alive to God* (see VIDYAJYOTI 1979, p. 495). The present work elaborates with greater depth and lucidity some of the key Ignatian concepts that emerge in the *Spiritual Exercises* of St Ignatius of Loyola.

The seven sections of the book are like seven windows, through which one can have a closer look and deeper appreciation of the interior of the Ignatian house. This way, the author tries to present a global vision of the four Ignatian weeks of spiritual exercises that represent the progressive and dynamic spiritual stages encountered by the retreatant in his spiritual journey. The author substantiates his reflections with appropriate texts from the New Testament given in the form of considerations or meditations at the end of each section. This is to highlight the fact that the Ignatian

retreat is nothing but a personal encounter with, and an experience of, Christ.

It is worth mentioning that the author has succeeded very well in incorporating the modern spiritual and psychological insights into his reflections on the *Spiritual Exercises*. And this renders his book a valuable commentary on the Ignatian spirituality.

Joe MATHIAS, S.J.

Living Together. By Carlos G VALLES, S J *Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash, St Louis, The Institute of Jesuit Sources*, 1984. Pp. viii-119. Rs. 15 (paper back).

"The occasion for the book was provided by the talks I gave over a year ago to a group of Jesuits in India who live and work together, and who had called me to direct a community retreat for them", says Carlos Valles, in the introduction to his *Living Together*. This is a book about community life Its author being a Jesuit, it is naturally permeated with the Jesuit idiom and spirituality, but "the message is for all priests and religious without distinction". The subject-matter dealt with in the book is hardly new; the core of it can be found in any Rules or Constitutions. One would be tempted to dismiss the work with a "we-know-all-about-it" attitude. But Valles has managed to make the book a delightful reading by punctuating his work with his own personal experience in community living, and other anecdotes of human interest From the very first sentence he takes pain to inform the reader, "I am writing this book from a position of weakness, not from a position of strength" His own personal struggles give the book both credibility and readability

The themes of the book cover various dimensions of community living: Friendship, Competition, Pluralism, Work, Dialogue, Sensitivity..., and in every dimension Valles provides insight into what "was", what "is" and what "should be". The book of Exodus, for Valles, is an indispensable reference for those who want to live together in God's name; and the book of Acts shows us the Christian experience of living together. the growth of the community "under the breath of the Spirit in freedom and joy". In providing the reader with a fresh understanding of the Exodus and the Acts communities, Valles gives a biblical setting to his reflections.

In no way can *Living Together* be regarded as a "handbook" for community living; but it can definitely be a stimulus and inspiration towards the growth of a community.

Valles is best known as an outstanding writer in Gujarati, with almost fifty books in the language to his credit *Living Together* could provide him with the breakthrough to the English-speaking world.

Cedric PRAKASH, S.J.

The Priest As Person. By Robert E. LAUDER. *Massachusetts, Affirmation Books*, 1981 Pp 143 $ 5 00

This book is an attempt to construc a philosophy of the priestly existence.t Written from a Western point of view, the book tries to highlight the meaning of priesthood in a secularised world. In a post-Christian era where the human person has lost connection with the transcendent Reality the role of the priest is becoming ever more challenging and yet relevant

The seven chapters, all dealing with the existentialist situation of the Western world, offer a vision for the priest in the modern world who is constantly being challenged with the question of identity The chapters on "The Priest: A Community Person", and "The Priest A Dynamic, Loving Presence", while underlining the new role for the priest of today, indirectly demythologise the pre-conciliar one-sided cultic aspect of the priesthood. However, the author has not done justice to his topic by ignoring one of the most essential aspects of the priestly vocation, namely the prophetic role in the exercise of the priestly ministry today.

Joe MATHIAS, S J.

Free To Love. Poverty — Chastity — Obedience. By Francis J MOLONEY, S.D B. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981. Pp. 96 £ 2 95

The author Francis J. Moloney has already made an impact through his renowned book *Discipleship and Prophets: A Biblical Model for the Religious Life* (cf. VIDYAJYOTI, 1982, p. 52). The present book follows the same trend of thought that reflects the conciliar and post-conciliar theology of religious life

Free to Love deals with the three essential aspects of religious life, namely the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity and obedience. The author approaches them from a positive point of view wherein the vows are seen as an expression and a movement of freedom in love for the sake of the Kingdom of heaven. In doing so the author

challenges the traditional and stereotype interpretation, or rather misinterpretation, of some of the key biblical texts normally employed by people to support and explain the *raison d'être* for the three vows. I would highly recommend those responsible for explaining the theology of religious life with special reference to the vows, to study closely some of the Biblical texts like Mk 10: 17-22 (the case of the rich young man usually quoted for the explanation on the vow of poverty); Mt 19: 12 and 1 Cor 7: 32-35 (used in support of the vow of chastity). The author's analysis of these texts is done in a scientific way and is a good and laudable attempt to rectify and clarify some of the distorted notions people have in the understanding of the meaning of the three vows

JOE MATHIAS, S.J

Aging: Spiritual Perspectives. Edited by FRANCIS V. TISO. *Lake Worth, Sunday Publications*, 1982 Pp ix-256 No price given

Here is one of the first fruits of the *Opera Pia Internationál*, a non-governmental organisation that works within the United Nations It is the result of the Pope's initiative in the field of culture OPI is cooperating with the UNO Fund for Population Activities and other private and public institutions in a project for active aging Throughout the world the number of older persons over 60 is increasing both absolutely and proportionally. The book is divided into three sections 1) a forward and a preface, 2) aging in the world's religions, 3) aging as fulfilment In the second section Africa, Indian America, China, Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam are all represented. Indian readers will find interesting the essay of Fr John Chettimattam, CMI on "The Place and the Role of the Aged in the Hindu Perspective". This section also includes a chapter on the "Art of Aging According to the Monastic Tradition", by the well-known Jean Leclercq, O.S.B. He got so much help from the sharing with Sr Cymbalista, a Benedictine nun, that her name is placed as co-authoress of the chapter. The third section enters into the philosophy, religious experience and mysticism of aging The book is true to its title. It does concentrate on the spiritual perspectives of aging. Underlying all the contributions by the Catholic authors is the whole doctrinal foundation on the "last things." I found some parts of the book a bit on the "preachy" side, but that does not negate the many fine things that a wise elder will find in these pages. It is worth having this book in house libraries. In a way the words of Dom Leclercq compress the message of the whole book: "The monastic tradition reminds us that the old need more than simply material care, social security, medical doctors or experts in geriatrics. The physical and spiritual difficulties of old age must not be neglected. The old people need to be consoled, encouraged, entertained, they need to feel that they are understood and that their presence among us means something to us, something that we value and cherish. If the witness of the elderly is apparently useless, it must be remembered that it is often a silent, recollected, patient and sometimes suffering presence lived in joyful acceptance of the will of God, in contemplation of His Word and His Words, in prayer for the younger monks. And if these latter serve the elderly with gentle care, then all members of our great human family, young and old together, will present to God the witness of what he most desires: LOVE" (169).

ROMAN LEWICKI, S J

Marriage

Marriage — A Relationship. By MICHAEL FOLEY. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981 Pp vii-88 £ 1 95

The book offers reflections and helps, not just ideas, theories and principles, based on experiences of married couples, the experts in this field. The book has in view those who are preparing themselves to marry and those who are already married. The author, a married man, addresses his reflections to such an audience. In ten short chapters he presents to them various aspects and problems of marriage and the need for an adapted education.

In Ch 1 Foley situates marriage in the changing world of today, where the joint or extended family has broken down, and the nuclear family is the norm. This fact often goes with the breakdown of neighbourhood communities: there is also a change of attitudes towards the roles of men and women, husband and wife At the same time Christians increasingly realise that marriage is a vocation The author speaks of the values and responsibilities of marriage in terms of the love-covenant and the parenthood involved. He has

fine and simple reflections on love and marriage, and is attracted by the observation of Rajneesh: "Lovers are always meeting for the first time" (16). Chapter 13 of 1st Corinthians on love is a charter for all love relationships, including marriage.

In his reflections Foley explores the area of the equality of spouses with their complementary differences, sex in the language of love, its spirituality, parenthood. He also goes into certain common problems of human relationships, practical problems of housing, money matters, etc. The chapter on "Marriage: A Vocation" is a fine short presentation of the spirituality of marriage, so important for the life-long journey of the married couples. This book appends a helpful reading list of books on marriage. Young men and women contemplating marriage and married couples will find this slim volume interesting and helpful.

S. AROKIASAMY, S.J.

The Growth of Love and Sex. By Jack DOMINIAN. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1982. Pp. 91. £ 2 95.

Dr Dominian has authored many books on marriage and its problems. Treating on the theme of love and sex he speaks here of the growth of people in their sexuality. He presents facts and information with a view to guide boys and girls, and their parents, and does it as a committed Christian The book is packed with concise information and insights deriving from modern medicine, psychology and sociology. There is a reassessment of the meaning of sex based on the inseparable nature of the procreative and unitive purpose of the marital intercourse. This unity between love and sex needs to be stressed in the education towards sexual maturity.

In the first three chapters Dominian traces the growth of the child in the area of love and sex. The training in this area should start from the very beginning of life, and important insights from psychology concerning the growth of children in the first five years are offered to the parents. A distinct new stage starts with the school years. With the discovery of another world, multiple relationships develop. Parents and educators should understand the problem of sex at this time, and facilitate the children's growth in maturity in the matter of love and sex by their supportive attitudes and enlightening words. In the first decade the boy and girl need to overcome hostile experiences and be healed through relationships that express unconditional acceptance. For a Christian, the relationship with God is such a healing experience

Dominian goes on to tackle the development of the problems in adolescence and puberty. He stresses the need, also in the second decade, of healing, specially in wounded adolescents, by restoring to them the sense of self-worth. Finally he deals with marriage insightfully, its basic values, its problems, and the healing it needs He says that the two relationships people have, to their parents and to their spouses, are very intimate and intimately related. "It is in the first relationship that we learn how to be loved and in the second one that we offer this love to our most precious neighbours, our partners in marriage" (p 91). The little volume makes for refreshing reading and will surely be useful to married people

A AROKIASAMY, S J.

The New Marriage Law. 2nd Edition. By George LOBO, S J. *Bombay, St Paul Publications*, 1984. Pp 150. Rs 12.

This book on marriage law by Fr George Lobo was reviewed in our journal in January 1983 (pp. 59-60) The present volume is second edition, substantially the same as the first. It treats of the Latin marriage law with relevant comparisons to the oriental law still in force, though the latter is in the process of revision. The commentary is simple and not too technical. The book, compact as it is, has the same price as the first edition. It will serve as a ready reference and a practical guide to priests and lay men and women.

S AROKIASAMY, S.J.

Psychology and Counselling

Psychology and Moral Theology. By B. KIELY, S.J., *Rome, Gregorian University Press*, 1980. Pp. 302. (No price given).

This doctoral dissertation is an interdisciplinary study mapping the resources and approaches of the two disciplines mentioned in the title in order to show their complementarity in bridging the gap between the ideal and the real in the life of a human being. Using Lonergan's method, Kiely sketches the ways in which the psychological resources and abilities which people typically have, may come

to expression at each of the four levels of the subject's operations: experience, understanding, judgment and decision.

Man has a fundamental need and is in search of a "religious symbol of immortality" (borrowing from Becker), and this ultimate meaning comes to him through a three-fold process of conversion — intellectual, moral and religious. Kiely analyses the approaches of Kohlberg, Rulla and others, and their contribution to understanding the complex process of moral reasoning and decision with respect to the moral task and to the intra-personal conflict, aggravated by subconscious emotions, that the moral agent faces. The analysis aims at helping the understanding of the process of conversion by showing the lines of convergence between the two disciplines.

The study of the tension between human desire and human limitation provides a wider content within which the significance of temptation and of conversion, as basic categories of moral theology, are examined. A clarification of the significance of the specifically religious and Christian factors in moral theology is attempted. We must count on the possibility of a 'material' coincidence between the psychological and the moral or religious categories (as between psycho-pathological tendencies and sin, for instance). Finally, some implications at a more practical level are explored. It is argued that an integration of moral theology with contemporary psychology, with the aid of a sufficiently critical method, can be valuable in the effort to attain an anthropology that is both theologically adequate and practically useful

Kiely's work has good insights on the lines of convergence between the two disciplines. He is realistic and makes no "benign projections" or optimistic assumptions concerning people's reflective capacity and emotional equilibrium. He uses Lonergan's method as a valuable tool for resolving the ideal-real dialectic. He begins with it, bases his development on it, and to crown his findings, makes the Lonerganian dictum 'Be attentive, be intelligent, be reasonable, be responsible' a practical methodological norm for the moral agent.

Because Kiely has succeeded a good deal in drawing lines of convergence between psychology and moral theology, thus narrowing the gap between the ideal and the real in the moral agent, one may get the impression that, once these lines of convergence are drawn, the problems of morality and the moral agent will be solved. This would be to ignore or to underestimate the structural dimension of evil. Kiely has not done enough justice to this. He has not taken sufficiently into account the ideological conditioning at a broader societal level that is part and parcel of a person's upbringing and daily life. Moreover, evil, specially social evil, cannot be explained merely in terms of the "desire-limits" conflict in individuals. This ignores a stuborn fact that liberation theologians emphasize: individual sins get lodged in corporate structures in ways that virtually endow socialised forms of evil with a life of their own Moreover, it ignores the further stubborn fact that changed individuals do not necessarily produce a changed society· "they may fight with greater zeal than ever, to see that a society as they know and love it remains unchanged" (R. M Brown, *Theology in a New Key*, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1978, p. 124). Thus in order to attain an anthropology that is both theologically adequate and practically useful, we may have to take a structural view of reality for which we may have to draw from Marxian thought.

Gregory D'Costa, S J

Tight Corners in Pastoral Counselling. Frank Lake. *London, Darton, Longman and Todd*, 1981. Pp. 187. £. 4.95.

Frank Lake's contoversial book argues that the first three months in the womb are crucially important for personality development. He further claims that there is evidence that many of the intractable social and individual disorders like homosexuality, anti-social tendencies, depression, etc., have their origins in the reactions of the foetus to maternal distress.

Frank Lake is a psychiatrist and founder of the Clinical Theology Association, which has treated over 12,000 people in counselling. He claims that he has made a new breakthrough in research into the origins of personality. Contemporary personality theories have assumed that nothing of importance could happen before birth, although some big names in psychology like Otto Rank had given some indications to the possible influence of pre-natal happenings on personality development. According to Frank Lake, techniques have been evolved to make experiences of intra-uterine existence accessible to consciousness. The findings from 1,200 people who have undertaken the 'research' into their own experiences, indicate that the

maternal tranquility is of profound importance to the healthy development of selfhood. The foetus is especially vulnerable during the first three months after conception.

The book covers a range of problems met by the counsellor who has to work within a Christian frame of reference. The discovery of pre-natal determinants is particularly relevant in the understanding of the present day cult of violence and the nature of homosexuality.

The author proposes guided imagery and fantasy journeys based on Gestalt therapy, bio-energetics, T.A., etc., to trace back pre-natal intra-uterine experiences According to him people are able to see their life in a flash with significant details. Once this is done, he leads people to 'stitching up' operations of integrating the unhealthy experiences into their adult life by identifying and suffering with them in an atmosphere of empathy, respect and genuine care. In this integration process Christian theology and spirituality can play a great role. He recounts the usefulness of prayer groups and charismatic renewal programmes in the process of healing the hurt memories.

Although the validity of many of the propositions in the book is still to be further studied and tested scientifically, all in all, Lake throws open a vast and interesting area of psychology research before psychotherapists and pastoral counsellors.

Mathew CHEMPLANY, S J.

Problems of Celibate Friendship. Felix M. PODIMATTAM, O.F.M. Cap. *Bangalore Asian Trading Corporation*, 1983. Pp. 104. Rs 18.00.

Celibate friendship is a delicate topic, which is seldom discussed in the open. In recent years there has been more and more frequent coming together of men and women celibates for study, apostolate, prayer, sharing, etc. This coming together has brought in a lot of freedom and freshness in celibate relationships. At the same time this has also given occasion to many emotional and even physically intimate relationships with people of the other sex. A large percentage of departures from celibate life in recent years seems to be preceded by such relationships. Many are upset about this and some even advocate a return to the cloister, walking in pairs, keeping parlour doors open, stopping combined apostolates, etc.

In this background the booklet, *Problems of Celibate Friendship*, is a timely publication. The author, a well known moral theologian, has faced the delicate subject with clarity and boldness. He has taken into account the recent insights of anthropology, sociology, psychology and spirituality without doing violence to sound Christian theology and morality. He has shown that the love of God is not only not against love of man, but also essential for human development. Perhaps he could have gone one step further with St John and Jesus himself and said that the love of man is the concrete form of love of God !

The author strongly advocates celibate friendship in the present book. At the same time he has not minimized the risks and dangers of such friendships. Only in the context of utter truthfulness to oneself and the friend in prayer and self-awareness and with the support of an understanding community, such relationships can grow into maturity. Relative emotional maturity is at the centre of any meaningful relationship, let alone celibate friendship among men and women.

Mathew CHEMPLANY, S.J.

See also p. 573

Book Notices

Biblical Books

The Beatitudes. By Francis RIPOLL, S.J. 2nd edition, *Bombay, St Paul's Publications*, 1984. Pp. 116. Rs. 8. This is a beautiful exposition of and a topical reflection on one of the basic texts of the New Testament by a veteran professor of Scripture. For each beatitude he also offers suggestions for further Biblical reading and points for prayerful discussion. A useful aid to personal growth and for Christian formation of groups.

Aids to Biblical Prayer-Groups on Reconciliation and Redemption. By Archbishop Leobard D'SOUZA. *Bangalore, Asian Trading Corporation*, 1983. Pp. 62 Rs 8 The book contains 16 biblical meditations on a theme which is always pertinent to the life of the Church and of each individual.

Social Issues

Justice in Words and Injustice in Deeds for the Depressed Classes. By V. R KRISHNA IYER, 1984. Pp. 19. Rs 5.

Church and Society. Sociological Perspectives on Lay Participation. By Alfred de SOUZA, 1984. Pp. 35. Rs 5.

Christian Colleges and a More Human Society. By Alfred de SOUZA, 1984 Pp. 22. Rs 5.

These booklets are nos. 14, 16 and 17 respectively of a useful monograph series published by the Indian Social Institute in New Delhi on topical issues. Justice Iyer shows the contradiction between the promise of Indian social legislation and the actual treatment of the oppressed by Indian society, and calls for a real social democracy. Dr de Souza, Director of the ISI, studies the implications of the sociological reality of India for the ministry and structure of the Church in general and for Christian colleges that want to serve the cause of a just society.

Relevance of Christianity in India Today. Edited by Cyril DESBRUSLAIS *et alii* Published by *The Student's Council, Jnana-Deepa Vidyapeeth, Pune*, 1984. Pp. xviii-184. Rs 20. This book contains the papers and proceedings of the seminar run by the students of the Papal Athaeneum of Pune in July 1983. The articles are well focused on the theme of the title and the book should be carefully studied by leaders of the Christian community in India, at all levels. The authors include eminent theologians and sociologists, an RSS man, a Muslim and a Dalit. The student body deserves congratulations for this timely publication

Domestic Workers Struggle for Life. Edited by Olinda PEREIRA. *New Delhi, C.B.C.I. Commission for Justice, Development and Peace*, 1984. Pp. 55. Rs. 10 (Distributed by ATC, 150 Brigade Rd, Bangalore). "This book is a synthesis of the 'National Survey on Domestic Workers', brought out by the Labour Commission of the C.B.C.I. at the close of 1980, together with the discussion papers of a seminar held at the Indian Social Institute, New Delhi, in February 1982, to study the findings of the survey. The data were fully dissected and thoroughly discussed by a group of competent persons drawn from a cross-section of society" (from the back cover page). Beautifully printed and socially useful.

Spirituality

Legacy of the Heart: Texts on the Heart of Christ (1965-1983). By Pedro ARRUPE. S.J. *Edited by Jerome Aixalá, S.J. Anand, Gujarat Sahitya Prakash*, 1984. Pp xvi-163. Rs 28 (p.b.), 22 (cloth). Few Church leaders of modern times have been able to touch the hearts of the young religious in the way Fr Arrupe, till recently the Jesuit General, was able to do. He is a symbol of hope for many religious throughout the world. He is also a deeply spiritual person, a mystic on his own right. This collection of 17 texts coming from him provides much spiritual food for a renewal of the devotion to the Sacred Heart. The collection is enriched by a forward by Karl Rahner, Fr Arrupe's own touching farewell homily at La Storta in 1983, and Fr Ignacio Iglesias' article on "The Christ of Fr Arrupe". Fr Aixalà has edited the text with his usual thoroughness and provides the necessary information.

Do Whatever He Tells You. By the 208th General Chapter of the Order of the Servants of Mary. *Rome, General Curia OSM*, 1983. Pp 116. This is a document issued by the Order of the Servants of Mary, with the help of their *Marianum*, a Faculty of Theology in Rome. It makes reflections and proposals for promoting Marian devotion today. It derives much from recent approaches to the Mystery of Mary and from such documents as that of Puebla. It is a good source for a modern course on Mariology, specially in the context of religious congregations dedicated to her.

A Preached Thirty Day Retreat for Religious. By Rev. James S. FOLEY, S.J. *Bangalore*, ATC, 1984. Pp. 94. Rs 18. The material provided by the book is taken from the Bible, but the structure follows closely the classical pattern of the Ignatian retreat. Retreat preachers will find here handy biblical material. The book can also be used for a private retreat.

Who Has Believed Our Report ? A Retreat on Reconciliation. By A. Paul DOMINIC, S.J. *Bangalore*, ATC, 1984. Pp. 147. Rs 25. A retreat given to the priests of the Warangal diocese is here made available to a wider public The 14 chapters are in form of talks or reflections and will be useful for personal retreats and spiritual reading.

Prayer for All Times. By Pierre CHARLES. *London, Collins Fount Paperbacks*, 1983. Pp. 157. £ 1 75. This is a new adition of a classic on prayer, published first in the twenties in French and English and again, in English, in 1956. Robin Waterfield has made a fresh translation from the French and considerably pruned the original 3 volumes into a handy booklet. Spiritual people will find much food for prayer in the thoughts of one of the great missiologists of the past generation.

Rebel at Prayer. By Cedric REBELLO, S.J *Bangalore, ATC*, 1984 Pp. 128. Rs 25. This is a collection of meditations or prayers on the social problems of our times arising from the experience of living among the poor in urban India. Many thoughts will provoke reflections that should lead to action.

From the Burning Sands. By Thomas VELLILAMTHADAM. *Kottayam, EBOSC Publications*, 1981. Rs 4. Fifty short, one or two page "existential meditations" on various aspects of Indian life· Divali, Rakhi, Holy, Water, Snakes, Slums, Widow-burning, Shiva, Krishna, etc. etc.

He Walked the Way. By Jose KUTTIANIMATTHATHIL, S.D B. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1984. Pp. 126. Rs 25. Twelve somewhat extended meditations on the life and meaning of Jesus are illustrated by twelve beautiful and apt photographs. The reflections make abundant use of Scripture and refer occasionally to some modern authors or events. Specially "recommended to serious-minded young people".

The Holy Waters. Indian Psalm-Meditations. Text by Martin KÄMPCHEN and Woodcuts by Jyoti SAHI. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1984. Pp. xiv-142. Rs 28. The title page shows that the lovely woodcuts of the book form an integral part of its message — hence two "authors" are mentioned. The meditations take the psalms and Indian texts and the Indian reality as the source, and are presented in the main eight *rasas* of the Indian aesthetic theory. They are also correlated to the five cosmological elements known to ancient Indial. This is a valuable help to those Christians who would like their spiritual life fecundated by the Indian and the Biblical traditions together. It is thus a sample of inter-religious dialogue and of the theology of religions in practice.

Twenty-Two Ways of the Cross. By R. H. LESSER. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1983. Pp. 140. Rs 8. A help to introduce variety in a traditional and still valuable devotion. The various "Stations of the Cross" are woven around specific themes or written for specific people (children, married people, nuns, priests, etc.).

The Joy of Francis of Assisi. By Cardinal G. DANNEELS. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1984. Pp. 30. No price mentioned. A translation of the letter of the Archbishop of Brussels on the occasion of the eighth centenary of St Francis. The text can be used as an inspiration for teaching and sermons.

Witnessing Christ. By Lawrence P. COLACO, S.J. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1984. Pp. x-63 Rs 10. This is a colection of 12 reflections on Christian life and witness, written from within the perspective of a life lived in the Jesuit order and making direct or oblique references to the incidents in its community life. The expression "communal meetings" for "community meetings" could be misleading for some people.

Inter-Religious Dialogue

God-Experience. Edited by J. PUTHENKULAM, M.S.F.S. *Khamgaon, Franselian Vidyaniketan Publication, Spiritual Series No.* 1, 1984. Pp. 240. Rs 30. The book contains a collection of many different essays by distinguished scholars, unified under the rather broad theme of the title. The articles touch areas from the Hindu and Christian tradition. A contribution to dialogue at the level of articulation of the spiritual experience.

Life and Death — A Christian-Luo Dialogue. By Jude J. ONGONG'A. *Eldoret (Kenya), Gaba Publications*, 1983. Pp. x-65. This is a study of the eschatological belief of the Luos or Jaluos (a people occupying a large territory in Eastern Africa), in comparison with the Christian beliefs, in view of an inter-religious dialogue and inculturation. The study is a concrete example of the encounter of religions and in India could be of interest to those involved in tribal theology.

Pastoral Theology

Preparing for Marriage. By Anthony GRUGNI and Alexander SACCHI. *Bombay, Better Yourself Books*, 1983. Pp. xxii-236 Rs 20. A practical and informative manual for those preparing to enter the married state. The stress is on the medical and legal aspects, but the spiritual dimension is not forgotten.

Counselling Youth. By Marie Mignon MASCHARENHAS. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1983. Pp. 126 and a chart 3rd edition, 1983. Pp. 15. A handbook for love, sex and marriage that has proved its usefulness by going into a 3rd edition. The first edition was reviewed in VIDYAJYOTI 1981, p. 152.

Are You OK ? The Act of Self-Realisation. By SATYANVESHI. *Published by the author, Bishop's House, Nellore*. Pp. xii-159. Rs 7. This is offered as a help to personality growth from a Christian perspective by an enthusiastic young priest who shares his jottings and reflections with the rest of the world.

Take Your Child to God. By R. H. LESSER. *Allahabad, St Paul's Publications*, 1982. Child's Book, pp. 72, Rs 5. Catechist's Book, pp. 192, Rs 10. These booklets are announced as "an easy way to train young people for the first sacraments", meaning actually first communion, first confession and confirmation. The language is simple and adapted to the young minds. It should make the task of parents and teachers easy and enjoyable.

Parish Councils. By R. H. LESSER. *Bangalore, ATC*, 1983. Pp. 31. Rs 4. This is a modest article to explain the idea of Parish councils and how to start them. It should help pastors in the Church to follow up one of the basic orientations of Vatican II, and is a timely preparation for the Synod on the laity in 1986.

Biography

Cosmic Ecumenism. Via Hindu-Buddhist Catholicism. By Anthony ELANJIMITTAM. *Bombay, Aquinas Publications*, 1983. Pp. 488. No price given. This is a philosophical autobiography of a colourful Indian Dominican who is also known as Isabodhananda. A prolific writer, he has travelled a long way from the "Rome-bound Catholicism" of his childhood and adolescence in Kerala to the "God-Wide

and sky-high Catholicism which will be the religion of the thinking world of spiritual aspirants who have no other basis for their faith and spiritual practice save that of rational inquiry, mystical intuition and a deep humanism of a radical type". The story abounds in reminiscences, in criticism of the extablished church, and in a sincere of eclectic ecumenism.

A Messenger of Goodness. Sister Rina Colussi· F.M.A. By Fr Luciano Colussi, S D B. *Calcutta, Don Bosco Catechetical and Multimedia Center*, 1983. Pp. 250. Rs 8. This is the story of an Italian nun, Daughter of Mary Help of the Christians, who came to India in 1948 aged 29 and died and worked in the North till her death in 1966. It is written by her brother, sharing with her the same Salesian devotion and zeal.

Mazzucconi of Woodlark. By Nicholas Maestrini, P I.M E. *Hong Kong, Catholic Truth Society*, 1983. Pp. xviii-214. Rs 22 50. (Available from the Examiner Press Bookshop, 35 Dalal Street, Bombay 1). This is the biography of an Italian priest, one of the first members of the Pontifical Institute of Foreign Missions in Milan, who was beatified in 1983. The new blessed had worked in the island of Murua ("Woodlark" to the colonialists) in the Melanesian archipelago, where he was axed to death in 1855.

A Little Way to God. By Gaston Roberge. *Anand, Gujarati Sahitya Prakash*, 1984. Pp. xxii-151. Rs 25 (paper), 29 (cloth). This is not just another biography of Theresa of Lisieux. It is a detailed and careful analysis of her spiritual experience and on how she felt while *becoming* a saint in such a short time. It is thus a book of religious and spiritual phenomenology. The author shows how the "little" way of the saint was her way of living the devotion to the Sacred Heart, and how the tradition coming from Paray-le-Monial influenced her way. A short biographical sketch and an account of Theresa's writings preceeds the spiritual biography proper, i.e. the study of Theresa's way to God flowing into her devotion to the Sacred Heart. This is a carefully researched book which will help people to discover not only the impressive personality of a great modern saint but also the relevance of the devotion to the Sacred Heart.

Storia del bellissimo Giuseppe e della sua sposa Aseneth. Traduzione di Marina Cavalli. *Palermo, Sellerio editore*, 1983. Pp. 89. Lirae 4500. This is hardly a biography, but the Italian translation of a well known ancient Jewish story of "Joseph and Aseneth" (cf. Vidyajyoti, 1976, pp. 177-180).

Hindi Christian Literature

Susamacarom mem samanantar ansa (Gospel Parallels). By B. H Throckmorton. *Bareilly, Hindi Theological Literture Committee*, 1981. Pp. xlvi-196. Rs 30 This is a translation of a careful synopsis of the first three gospels, as used in many seminaries and theological schools. The Indian edition of the English original was reviewed in Vidyajyoti 1977, p. 142. A useful tool towards teaching scripture in Hindi, an area where some Protestant churches have advanced a good deal.

Baibil: hamari pustak. By R. H. Lesser. *Ajmer, St Anselm's Press*, 1982. Pp. 92. Rs 7. Fr Athanas Kujur has done the translation of this primer of the Bible reviewed in CM 33 (1969) 335 and Vidyajyoti 40 (1976) 143f.

Bhanjit roti sadrs. By Peter G. van Breemen, S.J. *Indore, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra*, 1983. Pp. 210. Rs 10. Sr Clement Mary, C.S.S.T. has made this Hindi translation of *As Bread is Broken*, published in 1974. The book will inspire mutual love among people and help their spiritual and moral life.

Mukti ata. By Patrick Peter. *Indore, Satprakashan Sanchar Kendra*, 1983. Pp. 108. Rs 6. Those who are interested in Hindi popular plays (cf. Vidyajyoti, 1974, pp. 388-397) will surely welcome this drama on the life of Christ, the Promised One, that weaves OT and NT narrative stories. A song after each scene summarises its message and introduces the next scene.

Amrtopadesa. By Swami NARENDRANANDA. *Ranchi, Pradyumna Pandya*, 1981. Pp. 102. Rs 20. Swami Narendrananda presents here a collection of sermons on classical topics of the spiritual life like bhakti, mukti, atmabodha, etc.

Yisu Khrist ki jivani aur sevakarya. By Komal MASIH and Christopher B. PETER. *Bareilly, HTLC*, 1981. Pp. xvi-196. Rs 12. A "life" of Jesus and his teaching based mostly on Mark and using the other two synoptics. It is written at a certain level of scholarship, making good use of the sources available.

Baptisma prabhubhoj, aur dharmaseva. Khristiya-preranakarya aur susamacar-pracar. *Indore, HTLC*, 1983. Pp. xiv-157. Rs 10. Dr C. W. David has translated into Hindi two important documents of the W.C.C.: the Lima agreement on Baptism, Eucharist and Ministry and the document on Mission and Evangelism. This book, the 64th in the list of the Hindi Theological Literature Committee, will help students in the North to understand these important ecumenical documents and to express the issues involved in them to the people.

Malva ko khristiya mishanom ki den [1877-1977]. By A. B. SHIVAJI and Mrs A. MILNE. *Indore, HLTC*, 1983. Pp. xxviii-179. Rs 10. The book on the "contribution of Christian Missions to Malva" is an account of the work which the United Church of Canada and the Presbyterian Church in Canada have done in the Malwa District of M.P. The mission has had a special success among the Bhils.

Konkani

Vadoll ani Varem. By A. PEREIRA, S.J. *Goa, Xavier Press T.S., Pilar*, 1979 Pp. 340. Rs 5. A fictional psychological and theological story of a priest, inspired in the works of Maurice West, Pearl Buck and George Bernanos. It uses the insights of modern theology.

G.G.-S

Index

DOCUMENTS

SECRETARIAT FOR NON-CHRISTIANS

WORLD CONFERENCE OF RELIGION FOR PEACE

INDIAN THEOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

AUTHORS

(Bracketed numbers indicate Correspondence section)

ANALYTICAL INDEX

*(Cross references are indicated by an asterisk. *B refers to the Bibliography)*

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Contents of Vol. XLVIII

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE—JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

Cum permissu superiorum